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TWO SERMONS

BY

W. PARKINSON

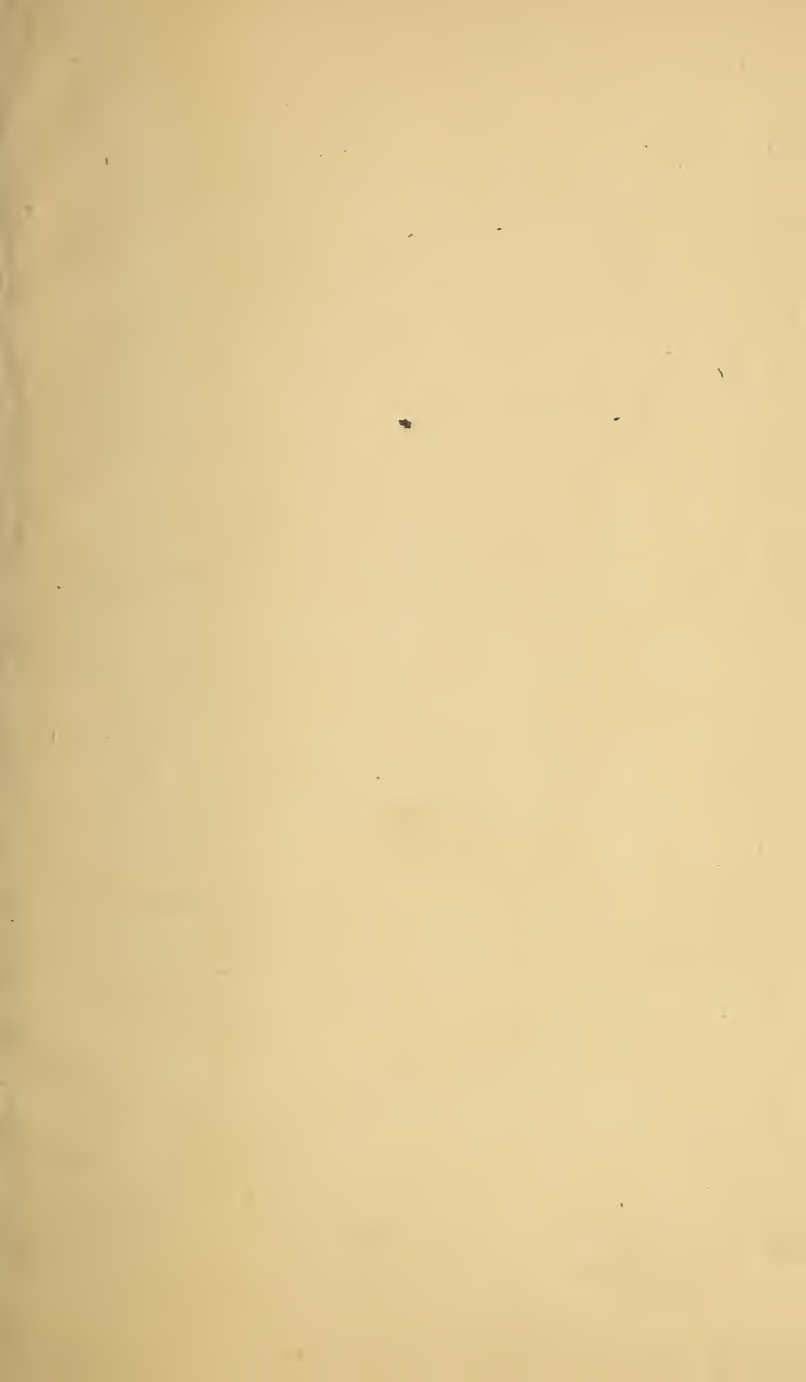
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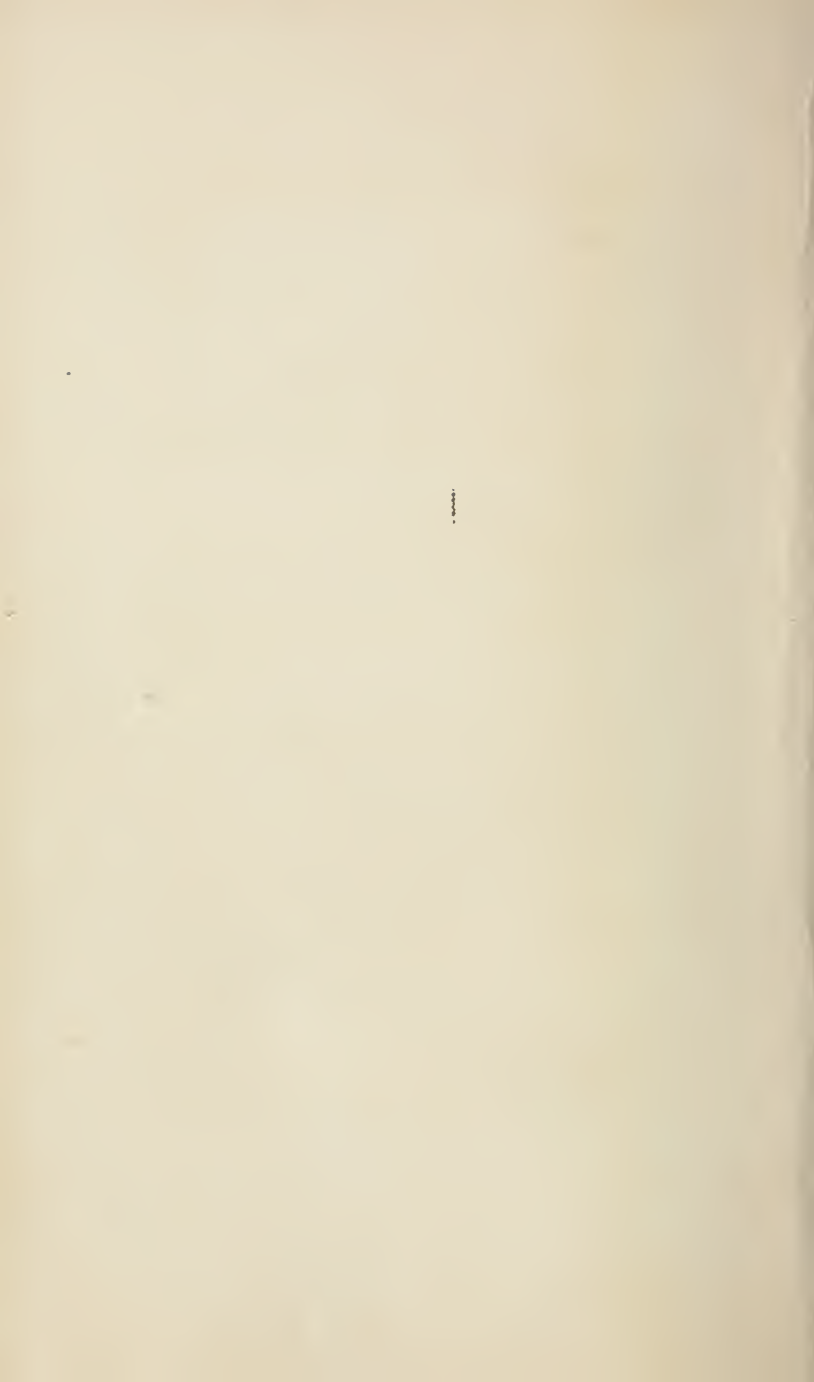
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A

JUBILEE SERMON,

CONTAINING

A HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN

OF THE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK,

AND

ITS PROGRESS DURING THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS SINCE ITS
CONSTITUTION.

Delivered in the Meeting-house of said Church, Jan. 1, 1813.

~~~~~  
By WM. PARKINSON, A. M., Pastor.  
~~~~~

Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee,
Deut. 8 : 2.

The Lord is good : a strong hold in the day of trouble ; and he knoweth
them that trust in him. *Nahum 1 : 7.*

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1867

City of Washington.

NEW-YORK:

RE-PUBLISHED BY A FRIEND.

John Gray, Printer.

1846.

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JUBILEE SERMON.

Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.—
1 Samuel vii. 12.

What is here recorded is accounted for in the history with which it is connected. From this history it appears that the Israelites had then been long under the dominion of the Philistines; who had not only greatly annoyed them by advantages taken in war, but also interrupted and suspended their public worship, by carrying away the ark of the Lord.(a) The ark, indeed, they did not long detain;(b) for, having set it in the temple of Dagon, probably, as a trophy of his supposed victory over the God of the Hebrews, Dagon was broken to pieces before it; and wherever they placed it, a plague of emerods was upon the persons, and another of mice upon the fields of the inhabitants.(c) The Philistines, affright-

(a) Chap. 5 : 1. (b) Only seven months, chap. 6 : 1.

(c) Chap. 5 : 3, 4, 9, and chap. 6 : 5.

ed at these judgments, assembled their lords, their priests, and their diviners, at whose united advice the ark was sent back and accompanied with valuable presents.(d) It was set down in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite.(e) Here again the indignation of God against the profanation of this sacred article, was awfully displayed: "fifty thousand threescore and ten" of the Beth-shemites, for curiously looking into it, were smitten with some fearful disease, and many, if not all of them, with death.(f) Alarmed at this, the Beth-shemites sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye down and fetch it up to you."(g) The men of Kirjath-jearim (as related verse 1 of this chap.) brought it up, and apparently, without any apprehensions, set it in the house of Abinadab. Here it abode a long time,* during which, under the labors

(d) Golden images of the emerods and mice. Chap. 5 : 3 and chap. 6 : 2, 3, 4, 5, 15.

(e) Chap. 6 : 18. (f) Chap. 6 : 19. (g) Chap. 6 : 21.

* Even until the times of David,—yea until he had reigned seven years over Judah, and was made king over all Israel: 1 Chron. 13 : 6, 7; a lapse of time including the government both of Samuel and Saul, and could not have been less than between forty and fifty years. Consequently the twenty years mentioned, 1 Sam. 7 : 2, must design not *all* the time the ark was at Kirjath-jearim; but either the time it was there before much noticed by the Israelites, or the time it remained there after they were brought again to seek the Lord in the use of it.

of Samuel, the Israelites were awakened to a sense of their sad condition, and caused to seek their forsaken God by means of it: "all the house of Israel, verse 2, lamented after the Lord." There may be much lamentation without any amendment; therefore, as an evidence of sincerity, Samuel required that they put away their idols; and which, as appears from the 3d and 4th verses of the chapter, they readily did. Now, being assembled for *public* humiliation and prayer, they solemnly confessed their sins, saying, "We have sinned against the Lord," ver. 6. The Lord forgave them, as is evident by his interpositions in their favor; nevertheless, the Philistines, having the disposition, not of the Lord, but of Satan, retained their ill-will against them; yea, seem to have been the more exasperated at their penitence; for "when they heard that the children of Israel were gathered together at Mizpeh," for the devotional purposes already mentioned, "the lords of the Philistines," with their forces, "went up against Israel." The Israelites were in great fear; and, sensible that none but God could deliver and protect them, they besought Samuel to intercede with him in their behalf: "Cease not," said they to him, ver. 8, "to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." "And, ver. 9, Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord; and Samuel cried unto the Lord; and the Lord heard

him." Did not Samuel, in these acts, typify Christ, who took his human nature, as a lamb without spot, and offered it to God to make an atonement for the sins of his people,^(h) and who not only upon the cross cried "Father, forgive them," but also, having ascended to heaven, "ever liveth to make intercession for them?" Heb. 7 : 25. Let, then, spiritual Israelites, amid all their enemies, and under all their fears and discouragements, have recourse to their divine intercessor; for if Samuel was heard, how much more Christ? That Samuel was heard is manifest from the providence which followed: "As Samuel, ver. 10, was offering up the burnt-offering," accompanied, as appears from the connexion, with cries to God, "the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel;" they *drew near*, but to their own ruin;—they *drew near*, "but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them." This thunder storm was the accomplishment of Hannah's prophecy; see chap. 2. ver. 10, and, therefore, notwithstanding it may have proceeded, as in common, from natural causes, it, nevertheless, unquestionably occurred at that particular time and place, and to accomplish that particular purpose, by the special appointment of God. According to *Josephus*,* the thunder was at-

(h) Heb. 9 : 14. 1 Pet. 1 : 19.

* L, 6. c. 2. § 2.

tended with an earthquake ; so that heaven and earth were combined to effect the ruin of Israel's enemies ; for the terrible lightning which accompanied the thunder, while it struck many dead, so blinded the others that they could not see their way ; and the earth, at the same time, opening in divers places, numbers fell into the yawning cavities and perished. It is added, "they were smitten before Israel;" not *by Israel*, observe, but *before Israel* ; for they were discomfited by the lightning and the earthquake ; and which was before Israel, both as to place and time ; as to place, being before their eyes, and as to time, being before they went out against them. "The men of Israel," however, encouraged by this signal interposition of God, "went out of Mizpeh, ver. 11, and pursued the Philistines (those of them who survived the lightning and the earthquake) and smote them, until they came unto Beth-car," which is a city of the Danites, and probably twenty or thirty miles distant from Mizpeh.*

Now, to perpetuate the memory of this remarkable display of divine power and goodness in favor of Israel, Samuel, according to the custom of Old Testament times,(i) erected the monument mention-

* This victory was another and a very considerable advance of that deliverance from the power of the Philistines which God had promised to Israel, and which he began to effect by the instrumentality of Sampson, Judges 13 : 5.

(i) Gen. 28 : 18, 31, 45, and 35 : 14. Josh. 4 : 3—9, and 24 : 26, 27.

ed in the text. “Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer,” that is, *a stone of help*, “saying,” as explanatory of what he had done, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

With a similar view, and in conformity to the times of the New Testament, I have composed and now deliver this sermon; the object of which is to preserve the recollection of the great goodness of God to this church, as it hath appeared in the providences which have attended the same, from its origin to about the middle of the last year,*—a year which, by way of allusion to an Old Testament Institution, may be termed its *Jubilee Year*, being the fiftieth since its constitution.

The method thought to be the best calculated to answer the end proposed, is to review

I. The circumstances which led to the constitution of this church, and

II. The circumstances which have marked its progress.

I. The circumstances which led to the constitution of this church.

In noticing these it must not be concealed, that

* At which time it had been intended to preach the sermon, but the want of some necessary information prevented. That period having past, it was from various causes, postponed from time to time, until finally it was thought expedient to reserve the subject for this day—a day on which, annually, we make a collection for our poor.

although the church whose history is under consideration, is called *The First Baptist Church in the City of New-York*, and although, compared with all other churches of the same denomination *now* in the place, it is in fact so, yet that a small society called a Baptist church had once existed here, but was dissolved, before the formation of this church. That society, however, consisted of *professed Arminians*, and was denominated a Baptist church merely from the characteristic ordinance of baptism. The founders of it were a Mr. Wickenden, of Providence ; a Mr. Whitman, of Groton ; and a Mr. Ayres, probably, a native of this place ; all of whom were Arminian Baptist preachers. Mr. Wickenden first preached here about the year 1709, and here suffered three months' imprisonment ; occasioned, according to the best information we can obtain, by his having preached without a license from an officer of the crown. Mr. Whitman came hither in the year 1712, by invitation of Mr. Ayres, who had providentially heard him, and continued his visits for about two years. His place of preaching was Mr. Ayres' dwelling house. Under his ministry many became serious, and some professed a hope in Christ, among whom was Mr. Ayres, his host. Of these, seven males and five females,*

* Viz : Nicholas Ayres, (mentioned above,) Nathaniel Morey, Anthony Webb, John Howes, Edward Hoyter, Cornelius Stephens, James Daneman, Elizabeth Morey, Hannah Wright, Esther Cowley, Martha Stephens, Mrs. Milder.

were baptized by Mr. Whitman, in 1714, and who are the first known to have been baptized in this city. Having apprehensions from the mob, they, with the administrator, assembled at the water in the night, when the five females were baptized; but during the administration of the ordinance to them, these words of Christ, "No man doeth any thing in secret when he himself seeketh to be known openly," (*k*) were so impressed upon the mind of Mr. Ayres, as to convince him that it was not his duty to be baptized in that secret manner: he mentioned his impression to the six brethren standing with him, and they all agreed to put off their design till morning: in the morning Mr. Ayres waited on the governor; (William Burnet;) related the case to him and solicited protection: the governor promised that the request should be granted, and was as good as his word; for, at the time appointed, he, accompanied by many of the most respectable inhabitants of the city, attended at the water, and the ordinance was performed in peace; the governor, as he stood by, was heard to say, "This was the ancient manner of baptizing; and is, in my opinion, much preferable to the practice of modern times." These baptized persons called Mr. Ayres to preach to them; and in September, 1724, they were constituted a church, and he was ordained their pastor, by Elders Valentine Whitman, of Groton, and Daniel Whitman, of New-

Port. Under his ministry, the audience so increased, that a private house could not hold them : wherefore they purchased a lot on Golden Hill, (not far from that on which this house stands) and thereon built a place for worship,* in the year 1723. To the twelve persons already mentioned, there were six added under the ministry of Mr. Ayres.† Mr. Ayres remained their pastor seven years ; when, Oct. 31, 1731, he resigned the care of them, and removed to Newport, R. I., where he died. After him a Mr. John Stephens preached to them and baptized six persons.‡ But Mr. Stephens quitting them to go to S. Carolina, and their meeting house being claimed and sold as private property, by one of the trustees, the *Arminian Church*, consisting then of twenty-four members, dissolved ; having existed about eight years.

The present church in this place, originated in the manner following : About the year 1745, Mr. Jeremiah Dodge, a member of the Baptist church at Fish-Kill, settled in this city, and opened a prayer meeting in his own house : at this meeting some of those who had been members of the former church, attend-

* According to the maps of that day fronting in Cliff-street.

† Viz : William Ball, Ahasuerus Windal, (of Albany,) Abigail and Dinah North, (of Newtown,) Martha Walton, (of Staten Island,) and Richard Stilwell, junr.

‡ Viz : Robert North, Mary Murphy, Hannah French, Mary Stilwell, and two others whose names we cannot now ascertain.

ed, and occasionally officiated; but as they were Arminians, and Mr. Dodge a strict adherent to the doctrines of grace, they enjoyed but little satisfaction together. Some time in the same year, 1745, Elder Benjamin Miller, of the Scotch Plains, visited the city (probably at the invitation of Mr. Dodge) and baptized Mr. Joseph Meeks.* Thenceforward the prayer meeting was held at the house of Mr. Meeks and that of Mr. Dodge alternately; and these two brethren and Mr. Robert North (formerly of the Arminian church) united in giving an invitation to Mr. John Pine (a licentiate in the church at Fishkill) to come and preach to them. His labors were rendered useful; partly in reconciling some of the former church to the doctrines of grace, and partly, in the conversion of others.† His place of preaching appears to have been, chiefly, the dwelling house of Mr. Meeks. In 1750 Mr. Pine died: after which they were visited by Elder James Carman (of Cranberry) who baptized at different times, until their number was increased to thirteen; when they were advised to join themselves to the church at the Scotch Plains, so as to be considered a branch of that church,

* Mr. Meeks became one of the constituents of this church, and remained an esteemed and useful member until his death: he died Oct. 6, 1782; aged 73 years.

† Among whom were John Carman and Nehemiah Oakly; who were baptized by Elder Halstead, pastor of the church at Fishkill.

and to have their pastor (Elder Benjamin Miller) to preach and administer the Lord's supper to them once a quarter. This was effected in 1753. Mr. Miller had visited them but a few times, when the congregation became too large to be accommodated in any private house, that was at their service, and therefore they hired, as the best and most commodious place their circumstances enabled them to procure, *a rigging loft* in *Cart and Horse-street*,* which they fitted up for public worship. Here they statedly assembled for three or four years; when, this place being otherwise disposed of by the owner, they (such of them as could be accommodated) returned to the dwelling house of Mr. Joseph Meeks; where they continued to hold their meetings for about one year.† Then they purchased a part of the ground on which the house we now occupy stands, and erected upon

* So called from a very noted and conspicuous sign of a *cart and horse* hanging in it: it is now called William-street.

† Thus far this history, particularly in what relates to the Arminian church, is taken from a manuscript left by Elder Morgan Edwards, deceased, once pastor of the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia. Henceforward the facts related are collected, principally, from the records of the church, letters to Associations and Association minutes: in some instances from tradition: in the latter part many things are said from personal knowledge; and when, in any part of the history, other publications have been relied on, they are referred to.

it a small meeting house, which was opened on the 14th of March, 1760.*

Having then a place for public worship, and their number being increased to twenty-seven, they solicited and obtained from the church at the Scotch Plains, a letter of dismissal, bearing date the 12th of June, 1762; and on the 19th of the same month they were constituted a church, by the assistance of Elders Benjamin Miller and John Gano.†

The doctrines in the belief and profession of which this church was constituted, and which she still maintains and professes, are contained in the Baptist Confession of Faith, printed in London, in the year 1688.

* The land now belonging to this church, on Golden Hill, consists of five lots purchased at three several times, viz: in 1759, 1772, and 1773; containing about 125 feet by 100. The lots, as purchased, were conveyed to certain individuals to hold in trust. In 1784 the church was incorporated, and in 1785 the said lots were conveyed to the corporation.

† Names of the constituents: John Carman, Jeremiah Dodge, Andrew Thompson, Samuel Edmunds, John Degray, Elias Bailey, Joseph Meeks, William Colegrove, Samuel Dodge, Catharine Degray, Mary Stilwell, Hannah Hoyter, Hannah French, Mary Morphy, Margaret Dodge, Sarah Meeks, Sarah Thompson, Jane Caswell, Mary Edmunds, Susanna Myers, Susanna Caligan, Ruth Prince, Mary Smith, Elizabeth Van Dyke, Margaret Simmons, Rachel Wilson, Catharine Lennon: of whom Samuel Edmunds is the only one now living; he resides at Hudson, and is a member of the church at Pleasant Valley, under the pastoral care of Elder Levi Hall.

However, as some may read this discourse, who have not seen that Confession of Faith, it is thought expedient to give the following summary of the views of this church, on such subjects as are chiefly disputed.*

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, we receive as given by inspiration of God,(a) and as our only rule of faith and practice.(b) According to these holy oracles, We believe, that there is one God;(c) that there is not another;(d) and yet that this one God subsisteth in three equal persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,(e) and that HE is perfectly comprehended by none but himself:(f) That HE alone, created the heavens and the earth with all the creatures they contain;(g) that man was made upright, and so able to keep the law under which he was placed;(h) but, being left to the freedom of his own will, he transgressed that law, and thereby fell into a state of depravity and

* In preaching the sermon, this summary of doctrine was omitted.

(a) 2 Tim. 3 : 15—17. 2 Pet. 1 : 21.

(b) John 5 : 39. Acts 17 : 11. 1 Pet. 4 : 11. 2 Pet. 1 : 19, 20.

(c) Deut. 6 : 4. 1 Tim. 2 : 5.

(d) Exod. 20 : 3—5. 1 Cor. 8 : 6.

(e) Isai. 48 : 16. 1 John 5 : 7. Matt. 28 : 19.

(f) Job 11 : 7. Isai. 40 : 28.

(g) Gen. 1 : 1 and 2 : 1. Acts 17 : 24—26.

(h) Gen. 1 : 17. Ecc. 7 : 29.

condemnation : *(i)* That the first man (Adam) was constituted a public head and representative of all his posterity ; *(k)* and consequently that when he fell they all fell with him into the same condition ; *(l)* That mankind, in their fallen state, are totally and universally depraved ; *(m)* and, as such, have neither ability nor inclination to return to God : *(n)* That man, although he hath sinned away his power to keep the law of God, is, notwithstanding, under obligation to keep it ; *(o)* and that upon pain of enduring its curse : *(p)* That God, in justifying and pardoning any of the fallen race of mankind, has no respect to any good works to be done by them, either before or after regeneration ; *(q)* but alone to the merits of the life and death of Christ, which he (God the Father) imputes to them, as the only meritorious cause of their justification and pardon : *(r)* That good works, though they have no influence in our justification and pardon, are, nevertheless, to be enjoined *(s)* and observed as useful, both before and after

(i) Gen. 3 : 6. Ps. 14 : 3. John 3 : 18.

(k) Rom. 5 : 17. *(l)* Rom. 5 : 12, 18, 19.

(m) Ps. 53 : 3. Rom. 3 : 10, 19.

(n) Jer. 13 : 23. John 6 : 44. Job 21 : 14. John 5 : 40.

(o) Deut. 5 : 7. Luke 10 : 25—27. *(p)* Gal. 3 : 10.

(q) Ezek. 36 : 31, 32. Luke 17 : 10.

(r) Isai. 43 : 25. Jer. 23 : 6. Rom. 3 : 21—28, and 4 : 3—6, 25, and 5 : 19, 21. Acts 13 : 39.

(s) Ezek. 2 : 3—5. Isai. 1 : 16, 17. 2 Cor. 5 : 11.

conversion ;(*t*) before conversion they are useful as to ourselves and families, so to civil society in common ;(*u*) and after conversion they are useful, not only for the same reasons, but also as they are essential to manifest both to ourselves and others, that our faith is genuine, (*w*) and especially to show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light :(*x*) That the gospel, which reveals the divine purpose and method to save sinners, (*y*) through the incarnation, obedience and sacrifice of Christ, (*z*) the second person in the eternal Godhead, is to be published to mankind in common ;(*a*) but that regeneration, faith in Christ, and repentance for sin, which are essential to the enjoyment of God, (*b*) and the performance of his acceptable (*c*) service ; as also perseverance in grace to glory, which is certain of all the regenerate, (*d*) are given

(*t*) 1 Tim. 4 : 8, and 5 : 31. Prov. 23 : 20—22.

(*u*) Prov. 27 : 2, and 28 : 4. Ecc. 9 : 17, 18.

(*w*) Matt. 7 : 16. 2 Cor. 5 : 17. 1 John 3 : 8, 10, 14. James 2 : 10.

(*x*) Matt. 5 : 13—16. 1 Cor. 6 : 20. Eph. 2 : 10. Titus 2 : 14, and 3 : 8. 1 Pet. 1 : 2, 9.

(*y*) 2 Tim. 1 : 10.

(*z*) Gen. 3 : 15. Isai. 7 : 14. Matt. 1 : 21, and 5 : 17. 1 Pet. 3 : 18.

(*a*) Matt. 28 : 19. Mark 16 : 15. Luke 24 : 47.

(*b*) John 3 : 3. 1 Pet. 1 : 8. Luke 13 : 3.

(*c*) Rom. 8 : 8. Heb. 11 : 6.

(*d*) Rom. 8 : 17, 30. John 10 : 28, 29.

only through the irresistible(*e*) operations of the Holy Ghost, the third person in the adorable Trinity, and that they are given by God the Father, according to his personal and eternal election of his people in Christ :(*f*) That baptism and the Lord's supper are ordinances peculiar to the gospel dispensation, (*g*) and are to be observed till the second coming of Christ :(*h*)—That those *only* who give scriptural evidence of faith in Christ, are to be baptized, (*i*) received into the visible church, (*k*) and admitted to the Lord's table :(*l*)—That nothing is a scriptural administration of the gospel ordinance of baptism but the total immersion(*m*) of the subject in water, in the name of the Holy Trinity, and by a man duly au-

(*e*) John 3 : 8. 2 Cor. 4 : 6. Acts 11 : 18. Eph. 2 : 8. Acts 5 : 31.

(*f*) Ps. 110 : 3. John 6 : 37, 39. Rom. 8 : 29. Acts 13 : 48. Eph. 1 : 3—14. 1 Thess. 5 : 9. 2 Tim. 1 : 9. Titus 3 : 5.

(*g*) Luke 16 : 16. Matt. 3 : 1—17, and 28 : 19, and 26 : 26—28.

(*h*) Matt. 28 : 20. 1 Cor. 11 : 26.

(*i*) Matt. 28 : 19. Mark 16 : 16. Acts 8 : 12, 37.

(*k*) 2 Cor. 6 : 14—18.

(*l*) Acts 2 : 41, 42. 1 Cor. 11 : 28, 29.

(*m*) This *only* answers to the primary meaning of the word *baptize*, the word by which, in our language, the act in question is signified ; and to a *burial*, the figure by which this act is set forth : Rom. 6 : 4. See the example of Christ, Mark 1 : 9, and the baptism of the eunuch, Acts 38 : 39.

thorized to administer ordinances :(*n*)—That the only officers belonging to a gospel church are bishops and deacons ;(*o*) and that every gospel church, regularly constituted, has the power of self government, being bound only by the word of God :(*p*)—And, finally, that there will be a resurrection both of the just and unjust, (*q*) a general judgment, (*r*) and an eternal separation between the righteous and the wicked ; the latter being banished to everlasting misery and the former being received into everlasting happiness. (*s*)

Having noticed the circumstances which led to the constitution of this church, and given a summary of its articles of faith, I proceed to notice

(*n*) Matt. 28 : 19.

(*o*) Philip. 1 : 1. Bishops, or overseers, are pastors and elders, Acts 20 : 17, 28.

(*p*) If the power of ecclesiastical government be not in the church, where is it ? Certainly not in the world, John 18 : 36 ; nor in pastors, 1 Pet. 5 : 3 ; nor in associations ; for much soever as may be said in favor of their expediency, no such bodies are recognised in scripture. The churches, indeed, for the solution of a difficulty, sent up to Jerusalem, to the apostles, Acts 15 : 1, 2 ; and churches *now* may, in effect, do the same ; the authority of the apostles, in their written decisions, being still in full force : see Matt. 28 : 20 compared with Matt. 19 : 28, and Luke 22 : 30. More over an apostle exhorts churches to govern : see Rom. 14 : 1, and 1 Cor. 5 : 12, 13.

(*q*) John 5 : 28, 29. Acts 26 : 8. 1 Cor. 15 : 22, 23.

(*r*) Acts 17 : 31. 2 Cor. 5 : 10.

(*s*) Luke 16 : 26. Matt. 25 : 32—46

II. The circumstances which have marked its progress. These have been numerous and various, prosperous and adverse.

After the solemnities of the constitution, on the same day, two deacons* were elected, and a clerk† to minute and record the proceedings of the church.

* John Carman, deceased, and Samuel Edmunds, dismissed.

Those elected deacons of this church at several times since: elected at dates not ascertained; Samuel Dodge, deceased, Andrew Thompson, deceased, and William Lawson, resigned; still a worthy member of the church. Elected at the dates following: Feb. 27, 1787, Thomas Sloo and Thomas Longly,—both dismissed; they removed to Kentucky. April 29, 1788, Jonathan Conrey, declined accepting the office,—deceased; and Abraham Cannon, deceased. May the 6th, 1788, William Thompson, dismissed, and William Norris, excluded. Nov. 2, 1790, John Bedient. Jan. 17, 1801, Eliakim Ford, dismissed to the church at Stamford. Sept. 12, 1806, James Duffie, Samuel F. Randolph, William Willess, and Thomas Hanes; (the last named resigned, and has since been excluded.) Oct. 4, 1808, Peter Conrey and John Tiebout; Leonard Bleecker, and William McIntosh; (resigned.) Feb. 6, 1808, Rosewell Graves, and Nicholas B. Lyon.

Present deacons: John Bedient, James Duffie, Samuel F. Randolph, William Willess, Peter Conrey, John Tiebout, Rosewell Graves, and Nicholas B. Lyon.

† Samuel Dodge. He remained clerk, notwithstanding his after election as a deacon, till May 28, 1804, when he resigned, on account of being about to remove to Poughkeepsie, where he died Oct 4, 1807, aged seventy-seven years,

On the same day, likewise, Elder John Gano, (before mentioned as one of the officiating ministers at the constitution,) having presented a letter certifying his regular dismissal from a Baptist church at the Yadkin, N. Carolina, and being thereupon received as a member, was, *unanimously*, called to take upon him the pastoral charge of this church. The gift of a pastor, especially of *such* a pastor, at the very time of the constitution, was a favor which laid the church under more than common obligations, to the great "Shepherd and Bishop of souls." As a man, Mr. Gano was then in the prime of life, and as a preacher, his "praise was in all the churches."* His labors

five months, and twenty-five days. He was an unblemished member of the church from the constitution till his death; and both a deacon and the clerk of the church for upwards of forty years. When he resigned as clerk, deacon John Bedient was chosen in his stead, who remained in the office till July 4, 1809, when he resigned, and deacon Rosewell Graves was chosen, who is now clerk of this church.

* Mr. Gano—of French descent—was born at Hopewell, New-Jersey, July 22d, 1727. He was called to the ministry in Hopewell church, and there ordained May 29th, 1754: his ordination sermon, preached by Mr. Isaac Eaton, A. M., was printed. From Hopewell he removed to Morristown, where he tarried about two years. From thence he removed to the Yadkin, N. Carolina, where he was instrumental in raising a pretty large church, which was broken up in the war of 1756, and he and his family were obliged to fly for their lives from the ravages of the Indians.—MS. left by Elder Morgan Edwards.

soon attracted public notice, and occasioned such an increase of hearers, as rendered it necessary for the church to enlarge their meeting house ; and which they did in 1763. The exact dimensions of the house when first built, I have not learned ; but as enlarged it measured 52 feet by 42 ; and which was generally well filled, and often too small. Nor were the people hearers of the word only ; for it was the pleasure of God so to attend his own truth, as delivered by his servant, that many were turned to the Lord, and added to the church.

On the 11th of Oct. 1763, this church, consisting then of forty-one members, and being in a peaceable and flourishing condition, was received into the Philadelphia Association.* It would afford me great

* Of which she remained a member till Oct. 1790 ; when she took a dismissal from that venerable body, with a view of uniting with other churches in an association in this city. This church, accordingly, sent a circular letter to neighboring churches, soliciting them to meet in New-York, by representation, on Tuesday the 12th of April following, to deliberate on forming an association. The ministers and other messengers of seven churches, viz : the church at the *Scotch Plains*, the church at *Oyster Bay*, L. I., the church at *Morristown*, N. J., the church at *Connoe-Brook*, (now *Northfield*) the church on *Staten Island*, and the *first* and *second* churches in *New-York* ; the latter of which is now called *Bethel*, met on the day appointed ; when a plan for an association, previously drawn up, was laid before them ; which they adopted, and ordered to be printed with the

pleasure could I proceed in the history of this branch of Zion, especially at so early a period of its existence, without having to relate some disagreeable, as well as agreeable occurrences ; but I cannot ; nor should it be expected : for Satan, as he is a stranger to peace himself, so, as far as permitted, he is ever exerting his influence to banish that blessing from the bosoms and societies of God's people. Alas ! that he should so often succeed ! especially that he should succeed by means of professors themselves ! and even by men professing to be ministers of the gospel of peace !! By means of such men, however, he succeeded to the great disturbance of this church ; as appears by certain circumstances recorded by Elder Gano. " During my residence in this place," saith he, (speaking of New-York,) " the church were in love and harmony, except a few difficulties that took place, by the arrival of two or three preachers

minutes of their proceedings, and circulated for the consideration of other churches. They adjourned to Oct. 19th, 1791, when the said seven churches again met by their delegates, and formally united under the name of the NEW-YORK BAPTIST ASSOCIATION. The first meeting of this association was held Oct. 31st. 1792, when five other churches, viz : *Piscataway*, *Lyon's Farms*, *Mount Bethel*, *Potolog*, and *Sag Harbor* were added. [The first church in New-York then consisted of two hundred members.] The association then adjourned to meet on the last Wednesday but one in May, 1793, which has been the time of its annual meeting ever since.

from England.”* These men, as appears from his account of them, each in turn, aimed to divide this church; and although they failed of accomplishing their object, they nevertheless, occasioned much trouble in the attempt.

Soon after, the church was considerably agitated by a difference of opinion about the management of psalmody. It had been the usage of the church to have the lines parcelled out; but a large majority becoming in favor of singing from books, as we now do, a resolution was past to adopt this mode; whereupon the minority, consisting of fourteen,† took dismissals, and having obtained the approbation of the church they had left, on June 5th, 1790, they were constituted under the name of the *Second Baptist Church in New-York*, by Elders Miller and Gano.‡

* The men of whom Mr. Gano speaks, were John Murray, ——— Dawson, and John Allen. Life of Gano, written by himself. Page 88.

† Viz: Jeremiah Dodge, and Margaret, his wife; Francis Van Dyke, and Elizabeth, his wife; Joseph Fox; Adam Todd; Nicholas Andresea; Nathaniel Tylee, and Hannah, his wife; Phebe Moss; Elizabeth White; Hannah Burdge; Ann Millen; Ann Angevine.

‡ The first pastor of this church was Elder John Dodge, a native of Long Island. He was born Feb. 22d, 1738, and was bred to physic. He became a Baptist in Baltimore, under the ministry of Elder John Davis. From thence he came to New-York, and joined the second church, where he was licensed to preach Jan. 14, 1771. As there is now no Baptist church in New-York distinguished as the *second*,

Notwithstanding these and some other unpleasant circumstances, this church continued to be comforted and increased under the administration of the word, until the *revolutionary* war ; during which Elder Gano was a chaplain in the army, the church in a dispersed condition, and its records suspended. The last time Mr. Gano administered baptism before he went into the army, was on April 28, 1776,* and the first time after his return, was on Sept. 4th, 1784.†

Were I disposed to attempt a description of this city and its inhabitants, at the time the army was disbanded, I would invite your attention to the subject in these words of the Psalmist : “ Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth ;” but I forbear ; and confine myself to the church. Of this Mr. Gano expresses himself thus : “ We collected of our church about thirty-seven members out of upwards of two hundred ; some being dead, and others scattered into almost every part of the Union.”‡

The meeting house also of this church, in com-

the reader will naturally inquire, what has become of it ? For an answer he is referred to the note on pages 32, 33.

* The subject was Hannah Stilwell.

† The subjects were John Bedient, now a deacon of the church, and Samuel Jones.

‡ Life of Gano, written by himself : p. 116, 117.

mon with other houses of worship in the city, had sustained great injury.* The church, however, soon had it repaired ; at least so as to be occupied ; when Mr. Gano, who is said to have been remarkable for selecting subjects suited to special occasions, preached a very appropriate sermon from these words : “ Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory ? and how do you see it now ? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing ? ” Hag. 2 : 3.

The church, thus happily restored to her public privileges, was, in a short time, raised to a more flourishing condition than she had ever enjoyed before : most of the members who had been scattered abroad, were, in the course of Providence, brought back to the city and to the church ; and the circumstance of so long a separation, and a review of the toils, the dangers and the privations sustained during the war, made the blessings of peace and of christian society, peculiarly valuable and pleasant ; every heart glowed with gratitude,—every countenance expressed satisfaction and pleasure,—and every meeting was a solemn, thankful, and joyful assembly. The congregation also was greatly increased ; and, to crown all, the word preached was accompanied with “ the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven ; ” so that frequent and pretty numerous additions were

* Having been used as a horse stable.

made to the church of such whose after conduct gave reason to believe that they "knew the grace of God in truth."*

Now, however, in the midst of prosperity, an event occurred, which greatly afflicted this church and society ; viz : the removal of their beloved pastor. At a meeting of business, on the evening of Sept. 30, 1787, Elder Gano informed the church that he had had it in contemplation for some months past to remove to Kentucky, and that he had finally concluded upon leaving them the ensuing spring. The church, exceedingly unwilling to be deprived of his faithful services, strove hard to retain him ; but without success. On the evening of April 22d, 1788, he and eight others, who were going with him, took dismissals from the church. The last time Elder Gano administered baptism, as the pastor of this church, was on Saturday, April 5th, 1788. On the afternoon of Lord's day, the 4th of May following, he administered the Lord's supper, and in the evening of the same day, took his final leave of the church and congregation, by preaching an affectionate and very

* The letter from this church to the Association at Philadelphia, in 1785, states, that during the preceding year, fifty-two persons had been received ; one by letter from Hopewell, one baptized in Connecticut, and fifty baptized in this city. The letters to the same body in 1786 and '87, state, the former an addition of forty-one, and the latter an addition of twenty-nine baptized.

affecting sermon from these words :—*Fare ye well !* Acts 15 : 29. On the next day he took his departure with his family from the city, bound for Kentucky ; and landed safely at Limestone, on the 17th of June following.*

The church was then dependent on supplies ; such as a committee appointed for that purpose, could procure. One of the supplies procured, was Mr. (afterward Dr.) Benjamin Foster,† who was then pas-

* Mr. Gano was the pastor of this church about twenty-six years. During his ministry the church had 297 baptized, and 23 received by letter.

† Mr. Foster was born at Danvers, Essex county, Mass. June 12th, 1750 ; and agreeably to the custom of that state, received the rudiments of learning at the town school. He professed to have had serious impressions about eternal things very early in life, but not to have been brought into the liberty of God's children until about twenty years of age. At the age of eighteen he entered Yale College, in the state of Connecticut, then under the direction of the learned and pious Dr. Dagget. His parents were respectable members of the congregational church, and he had been brought up with strong and conscientious prejudices in favor of the sentiments of that denomination. From these prejudices he was delivered in the following manner. While he was at college several *polemic tracts* on the subjects and mode of baptism made their appearance. The matter of them occasioned so much agitation and private debates among the students, that at length the question on the proper subjects and mode of that ordinance was fixed on as a subject of public discussion. Mr. Foster was appointed to defend *infant*

tor of a Baptist church at Newport, R. I. With him the church and society, generally, were pleased; and it appeared likely that, under his ministry, they

sprinkling. To prepare himself for the dispute he used the utmost exertion. He endeavored to view the question in every light in which he could possibly place it; he carefully searched the Holy Scriptures, and examined the history of the church from the apostles' times. The result, however, was very different from what had been expected; for when the day appointed for discussion arrived, he was so far from being prepared to defend infant sprinkling, that, to the great astonishment of the officers of the college, he avowed himself a decided convert to the doctrine that *only* those who profess faith in Christ are the subjects, and that immersion *only* is the mode of christian baptism; and of which he continued, ever after, a steady, zealous and powerful advocate. He graduated about the year 1772. Soon after, he was baptized and received a member of the first Baptist church in Boston, then under the pastoral care of Dr. Samuel Stillman, under whom also he studied divinity. He was ordained to the pastoral charge of the Baptist church at Leicester, Massachusetts, where he continued several years, and then removed to Newport, R. I., whence he was called by this church. In the year 1792, the degree of D. D. was conferred on him by the college of Rhode Island, in consequence of a learned publication of his, entitled, "A Dissertation on the seventy weeks of Daniel," &c. Dr. Foster was considered as, in general, a learned man, but as excelling, chiefly, in the oriental languages.

The following inscription upon a handsome marble is placed over his grave, in the burying ground of this church.

"As a scholar and divine he excelled; as a preacher he

would be happily united. Under this impression, on the evening of the 26th of July, 1788, the church, being assembled to deliberate on the subject, appointed a committee* to have a special conference with him on the doctrines of the gospel, and the circumstances of his relation to the church at Newport; and, if no obstacle appeared, to present him a call, in the name of the church, to become their pastor. Mr. Foster being then in the city, the committee saw him the next day; and, being satisfied, by a conversation with him, that nothing existed to render the measure improper, they presented to him the call of the church. He told them that the main question he could not immediately answer; but that he would answer it in writing, as soon as he could feel decided in his own mind. On the 15th of September following, the committee received a letter from him, informing them that he had accepted the call of the

was eminent; as a christian he shone conspicuously. In his piety he was fervent. The church was comforted by his life, and now laments his death."

This biographical sketch of Dr. Foster is, as to substance, extracted from Hardie's Biographical Dictionary, published New-York, 1801.

* Of thirteen, viz: Samuel Dodge, Benjamin Montonye, Ezekiel Robbins, William Norris, William Thompson, John Bedient, Jonathan Conrey, John Duffie, Abraham Cannon, Zebulon Barton, William Durell, Hugh Montgomery, Thomas Garniss.

church ; and on the 26th of the same month, he arrived with his family in the city.*

Dr. Foster's ministry here, though not long, and though generally acceptable, was, nevertheless attended with some considerable trials, both to himself and the church. He had preached here but a few months, when certain members of the church professed to discover in his sermons, some traits of what was then called *New Divinity*. What the sentiments objected to in the Dr.'s sermons were, and whether *orthodox* or *heterodox*, I shall not attempt to decide ; having never heard him preach, nor read any thing written by him on doctrinal subjects. The difficulty, however, continued and increased until it became, necessarily, a subject of consideration and discipline in the church ; and, after much forbearance and labor, on the evening of January 27, 1789, thirteen persons were excluded.†

* On the day of their arrival here, Mr. Foster and his wife were both inoculated with the small pox, which delayed his entering on the duties of his office until the 2d of December following, when he and his wife, upon satisfactory letters of dismissal, were received as members of this church, and he took upon him the pastoral charge of the same.

† It is with extreme reluctance that any notice is taken of this antiquated affair ; but as the nature of the discourse rendered such notice inevitable, it is thought a duty to all concerned to make the following observations. The said thirteen persons were not considered as censurable for op-

Others remained restless, and occasioned much disturbance in the church, until, after many meetings and endeavors, without success, to effect a reconciliation, on the 21st of January, 1790, it was resolved that all dissatisfied under the ministry of Dr. Foster should have liberty (notwithstanding the improper temper which many of them had manifested during the discussion) to take letters of dismissal, either to join the other Baptist church in the city, or to become a new church, as they might prefer; whereupon twenty persons took dismissions.*

posing what they thought to be error, nor, having failed of effecting a change, for seeking to be separated, in some proper manner from the church; but for the temper discovered and the means employed; also for not taking measures to be reconciled to their brethren, after being put away. To this latter fault it is supposed they were tempted, by a readiness discovered in the second church to receive them; for that church, instead of saying, "go be reconciled to your brethren," received them as in good standing. This occasioned a difficulty between the two churches; which, however, was settled in May, 1790. The mischief arising from churches receiving persons excluded from other churches of the same denomination, is incalculable. Extraordinary cases, nevertheless, may occur, in which it may be expedient for churches to receive such persons; particularly, when the church which had excluded a person shall have dissolved; in which case the person, however penitent, can have no opportunity of being reconciled and restored to the church that had excluded him.

* Of these two returned, and eighteen joined the second

This difficulty being terminated, the church appears to have enjoyed much harmony, and to have had no special cause of tribulation, throughout the remaining part of Dr. Foster's life ; which ended on Lord's day morning, August 26th, 1798. He died of the yellow fever, in the forty-eighth year of his age ; having been about twenty-two years an ordained minister, and nine years and about nine months the pastor of this church.*

church. Soon after receiving these, and the thirteen mentioned before, [p. 31,] that church fell into a state of contention, and sometime in the year 1790 divided ; each branch claiming the distinction of the *Second Baptist Church in New-York*. After contending this claim for a considerable time, they were both prevailed on to relinquish it ; the branch that remained assuming the distinction of the *Bethel Baptist Church*, represented on the minutes of the New-York Baptist Association, as constituted in the year 1770, and which is now under the pastoral care of Elder *Daniel Hall* ; and the other, represented on the minutes of the same association as constituted in the year 1791, assumed the distinction of the *Baptist Church in Fayette-street*, which is now under the pastoral care of Elder *John Williams*. See page 24.

* Dr. Foster, notwithstanding the difference of opinion which existed respecting his sentiments, and the difficulties hence arising, was highly respected by his literary and religious acquaintance, both as a scholar and a preacher ; and although no remarkable revival took place under his ministry in this city, yet there was a gradual addition to the church almost every year he was pastor. He baptized in

Now, again, the church was dependent on supplies ; and on the evening of September 27, 1793, it was agreed that Mr. William Collier, then a member and licentiate in the second Baptist church in Boston, be invited to serve as a supply until the first of May following, which invitation he accepted. At the expiration of that time, Mr. Collier was invited to continue six months longer, but declined, on account of ill health. Now for about one year, the church was supplied only in a desultory manner, by neighboring and travelling ministers, when Mr. Collier, who in the mean time had been ordained, was invited to officiate as pastor for at least one year. He accepted the invitation, and arrived here on the 14th of October, 1800.

Some time in the following winter, the corporation of the church, by and with the consent of the church, came to a resolution to build a new meeting house, the old one having become so much decayed that it was judged to be unsafe any longer to occupy it. The old house was taken down in March, 1801,

1789 nineteen ; in 1790, twenty-two ; in 1791, nine ; in 1792, nine ; in 1793, seven ; in 1794, seven ; in 1795, twelve ; in 1796, six ; in 1797, one ; in 1798, eighteen. The aggregate increase of the church in his time was, to be sure, small ; but this was owing to dismissions, exclusions, and deaths. The church, when he became pastor, consisted of one hundred and ninety-four members, and when he died, of two hundred and twenty-five.

and the new one opened on Lord's day, the 2d of May, 1802 ; on which occasion, after prayer by the pastor, Mr. Collier, an appropriate discourse, from Ex. 20 : 24, was delivered by Dr. Stephen Gano, of Providence.*

Mr. Collier, by repeated agreements between him and the church, continued to officiate as pastor for more than three years. During this time, however, the church observing the duties of his situation to exceed his strength, resolved, that it was expedient to procure some young man as a co-pastor, and accordingly procured Mr. Jeremiah Chaplin.† He arrived here Jan. 10, 1804 ; but previous to his arrival, Mr. Collier had received and accepted a call from the church at Charlestown, Mass., intending to remove thither the following spring. Accordingly, on Lord's day, April 8, 1804, he preached his farewell sermon in this place, from Acts 20 : 32, and on the 12th of

* While the new house was building, the church and congregation were favored with the use of what is called the *French Church*, in Pine-street, to meet in for worship.

The foundation of this house, without any ceremony, was begun about the first of April, 1801, and the whole building was completed within a little more than one year. It measures 80 feet by 65. It cost, including its furniture, about \$25,000. Of the ground on which it stands, see p. 14.

† Of Danvers, Mass. A young man of unblemished reputation, of a strong mind, of liberal acquirements, and of more than ordinary application.

the same month sailed with his family for Providence, on the way to his new charge.*

The church, being then without any ordained minister, solicited Mr. Chaplin to receive ordination and to take upon him the pastoral charge. After due deliberation he agreed to be ordained, but not immediately, as the pastor of this church. Arrangements were then made for his ordination, which took place in this meeting house, May 23, 1804.†

The church still indulged a hope that Mr. Chaplin would accept their call, and become their pastor; but God, who "hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of our habitation," had otherwise ordered: but a few months had elapsed when Mr. Chaplin, becoming strangely dissatisfied in his mind, and being solicited to return to Danvers, laid before the church a letter, in which he declined the acceptance of their call. The church, still willing to pursue their object, appointed a committee to confer with and endeavor to prevail on him to continue; but he, feeling it to be his duty to go, and

* Mr. Collier was esteemed by the church and congregation, as possessing a decent education, and as being a young man of good morals and motives.

† Dr. Thomas Baldwin, of Boston, preached the ordination sermon, from Daniel 12 : 3. Dr. Samuel Jones, of Pennypack, prayed at the laying on of hands, Dr. Stephen Gano, of Providence, gave the charge, and Elder John Williams, of this city, gave the right hand of fellowship.

willing to avoid all temptations to the contrary, left the city, without giving any opportunity for further solicitation.

The remaining part of this history, as it is inseparably connected with my own ministry. I enter upon with considerable diffidence ; it being, as every one knows, impossible for a man to speak of himself, either favorably or otherwise, without being subject to misconstruction and misrepresentation. The task, however, at all hazards, must be performed.

On the 6th of November, 1804, the church, according to their records of that date, assembled in their destitute condition, to deliberate on the important subject of procuring a pastor. As I, at their invitation, had visited them in the spring of 1802, and spent two Lord's days with them,* they of course had some knowledge of me ; and, from considerations best known to themselves, they agreed to send for me to spend three, four, five, or six months with

* On leaving the city, I gave a promise to a committee, appointed by the church to confer with me on the subject, that if I could reconcile it with duty, I would return and spend a few months with the church, the object of which on their part, I understood to be a trial of my qualifications as pastor ; but finding on my arrival at home, an increasing demand for itinerant preaching, and my wife not only unwilling, but apparently determined never to go to New-York, I at once relinquished the idea of going, and communicated my decision to the committee.

them, as I might find most convenient ; that so, by mutual observation and experience, we might have an opportunity to judge whether it was agreeable to the will of God that we should enter into the relation of pastor and people. Their letter of invitation I received at Fredericktown, Md., on the 17th of the same month, by the hands of their worthy messenger, Mr. Jonathan Weeden. My circumstances at that particular period were so ordered in Holy Providence, that all obstacles* which had existed in the

* Two of these I think it a duty to mention, as serving to show the special concern of Providence in my coming to this place. First, my sphere of labor : Though the pastor of the church at Fredericktown, Md., yet, by agreement, I was not expected to spend with them more than one Lord's day in every month ; and therefore, commonly, had almost daily appointments published for at least a month, and often two months ahead ; which, at any other time than that at which the invitation came, would have prevented compliance. Secondly, the uniform determination of my wife not to remove from among her relations, especially not to settle in a city. Now, however, both these obstacles were removed ; so far, at least as they had operated in the way of a visit, for a few months to this place ; for I, being just in a state of recovery from a severe illness of near three months, had made no appointments ; and the Lord having, in the time of my illness, removed by death our only child, a daughter of about twenty months old, my wife, overwhelmed with distress at the loss, seemed for a time to forget her attachments to the place of her nativity, and to consider a journey as rather desirable than otherwise.

way of my accepting the invitation were removed ; I accepted it accordingly, and arrived here on the 20th of December following. I came, not only, as the nature of the invitation implied, without knowing whether it would be the wish of the church that I should settle with them, but also without any intention to do so. My intention was only to spend the winter season here, and then to return to my former and favorite course of itinerary labors. Soon, however, I began to have doubts as to the correctness of my purpose ; for although no instances of awakening appeared for some months, yet I thought I perceived, not only an increase of hearers and attention, but also a growth of mutual attachment, between the people and myself. I felt them much upon my heart in prayer and preaching, and their conversation and conduct sufficiently manifested that they felt an interest in my labors.

When I had been here but about six weeks, the church, by a committee,* presented me a call to become their pastor, bearing date February 8, 1805. This act, although it appeared rather premature, was, notwithstanding, on their part, such an expression of satisfaction and confidence, as could not fail to increase both my attachment to them, and my doubts as to the propriety of leaving them. I then wrote to several ministers and other christian friends, solicit-

* John Duffie, John Bedient, and Jonathan Weeden.

ing their prayers and advice ; and found, from their answers, that they were all of opinion, that “ the thing proceeded from the Lord.” I was also considerably influenced by the conversation of such as I supposed to be God’s children, not only of this church, but also of other churches, both in the city and in the country ; and especially, by the manner in which they were led to pray that I might see it to be my duty to remain here.* My suspense continued ; “ And,” to adopt the language of Paul to the Corinthians, “ I was with you,” brethren, “ in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling :” *in weakness*, being just in a state of recovery from a long and severe illness ;—*in fear*, lest I should make a wrong decision ;—and *in much trembling*, under a sense of my insufficiency for so great a work. “ My speech and my preaching,” as you well recollect, “ was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom,” for which I neither had nor have either ability or inclination, “ but,” to the praise of divine grace, “ in demonstration of the Spirit and of

* I remember to have been peculiarly impressed, in one of our society meetings, under a prayer by Elder William Vanhorn, then pastor of the church at the Scotch Plains ; in which, after several other petitions on the same subject, he likened my mission to this city to that of Jonah to Nineveh, and prayed, seemingly, with more than common fervor, that I might not, like Jonah, run away from the work of the Lord.

power.”(a) Of this, some in the present assembly are living witnesses.

This testimony of the Spirit, began to appear in the latter part of February, and gradually increased until the vast change upon the face of nature, at the breaking up of a severe winter, and the ushering in of a beautiful spring and a fruitful summer, was but a just emblem of what was seen and felt in this church and congregation. What is said of the gospel dispensation in common might then, with a propriety seldom exceeded, have been accommodated to this place,* and to this people in particular: “Lo the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the Turtle is heard in our land.”(b) What beamings of the Sun of Righteousness! what meltings of icy hearts! and what flowings of penitential tears! what blossoms and buds of quickening grace! what fruits and effects of living faith! and what rejoicing and singing of new-born souls, were then witnessed here? And why? Because the voice of the Turtle, the voice of the Holy Spirit, attending the gospel, was heard in our land—heard by many poor sinners, not only convincing them of “sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to

(a) 1 Cor. 3 : 4. (b) Cant. 2 : 11, 12.

* The revival was not confined to this church: most of the churches in the city shared in it; particularly that in Fayette-street.

come," but also testifying pardon to their guilty consciences and communicating peace to their broken hearts, through the precious blood of the precious Redeemer. Scenes were then opened and impressions made which can never be forgotten; which *now*, indeed, we recollect with a mournful pleasure, each saying with Job, "O that I were as in months past;" but which we shall recollect in heaven, with overflowings of immortal gratitude and everlasting praise.

The first time I administered baptism in this city, was on Lord's day, March 3, 1805. We then had two subjects. On Lord's day, April 4th, I baptized eight.* Appearances in the church and congregation, now began to be such as carried in them irresistible evidence that it was my duty, for a time at least, to continue here. Accordingly, on Lord's day, April 14th, I made known to the church, (they having tarried for the purpose after public worship,) that I accepted their call, dated the 8th of February preceding.† In May I baptized five; who, added to those of March and April, and one baptized by Elder Chaplin, before he left the city, made sixteen, returned to the association that term, (May, 1805.) In

* That day I was received as a member of this church, on evidence of good standing in the Baptist church at Fredericktown, Maryland.

† This call provides that either party may be released from the obligation on a notice of six months.

June I baptized six ; in July, twenty ; and in August, twenty-four.*

Now, in the course of Providence, I was called to go on a tour to the South : I calculated to return in September, but the yellow fever breaking out in the city, I did not return until the 22d of October. During the rage of the *epidemic*, our meeting house was closed ; no church meetings were held, and, of course, no records were kept.

The first time we met, as a church, after the fever, was on the evening of November 1st, when four persons, on a relation of their experience, were received as candidates for baptism, and who, on the Lord's day following, were baptized and acknowledged as members of the church. In December I baptized sixteen.

Now again (circumstances in Providence rendering it necessary) I made a tour to the South, expecting to return in January, but was detained so as not to arrive here until the 2d of April, 1806. During my absence the church was supplied, chiefly, by Elders Caleb Blood and John Ellis, by the latter of whom, on the 2d of March, six persons were baptized and received into the church. In April I baptized nine, and in May six ; making in all ninety-one

* The two numbers last mentioned were the largest received during the revival. The most usual numbers were from six to twelve.

received on a profession of faith and baptism, from the association in May, 1805, to that in May, 1806.

The ingathering of which I now speak, was chiefly remarkable for its gradual progress and long continuance, both of which are evident, on viewing, in connexion with the numbers already mentioned, those reported to the association at a few of its succeeding meetings. At the meeting in 1807, we reported 81 ; at that in 1808, 94 ; at that in 1809, 53 ; at that in 1810, 42 ; at that in 1811, 43 ; and at that in 1812, 20 ; baptized and received, on profession of "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

In this view of the church, since my connexion with it, we have witnessed much that has been both pleasing and comforting ; and of which it is hoped we shall ever have a grateful recollection.

Adversity, however, as well as prosperity, is an attendant on human life ; and it is no doubt, in great mercy to mankind, that, according to Ecc. 7 : 14, "God hath set the one over against the other," that so, either by a happy mixture or by a seasonable exchange, the one may suppress presumption and the other despair. As this is true of human life in common, so especially of christian life ; for every church of Christ, though at some times, like *Jerusalem*, a vision of peace, is, nevertheless, at other times, like the *Shulamite*, a company of two armies. Both these conditions have been largely experienced by

this church. And as the number of hypocrites in a revival, generally, bears about the same proportion to that of real converts, which, in a harvest, the chaff does to the wheat, and as the last ingathering to this church appears, from her records, to have been much greater than any preceding one, so, consequently, it can be no matter of wonder, if among them there should have been a greater number of false professors, "crept in unawares," nor yet, that the separation of the dead from the living, should have occasioned more labor and sorrow than had ever been endured in the family before.

The principal cases of difficulty and labor which have occurred in this church, within a few years past, are the following :

In 1808 some dissention arose about doctrine, which, in the course of three years, occasioned the exclusion of eight or ten members ; some of whom, however, were persons of old standing in the church.

In the same year another difficulty arose concerning slave holding. On this many meetings were held, and much discussion had ; when the church generally, willing to discountenance the practice, resolved that in future no person holding a slave for life, should be admitted a member ; and appointed also a committee to wait on such of her members as held slaves, to obtain, if possible, their consent to manumit them, at such periods as their several ages and times of past service might justify, and to take their certificates of

the same accordingly. As this committee was generally successful, and as the church deemed it unjust to use any compulsive measures with those who had been received, and till then retained, though known to hold slaves, it was hoped that all would have been satisfied. Some persons, however, will be satisfied with nothing as a standard of propriety, but that which they themselves have set up : such remained restless ; and the spirit which they manifested, not only then, but also through the whole of the preceding discussion, left on the minds of many, very unfavorable impressions concerning their motives. Nor did that spirit depart with the termination of this business ; but ever after, distinguished a certain class of members, to the great disturbance of the church, so long as they remained in its connexion.

At about the same time, also, the church was greatly harassed with the solicitations of several young men for license to preach. Some of them were permitted to exercise their gifts before the church ; and although most of them discovered no qualifications for the work, it was, nevertheless, not without great difficulty that such were prevailed on to desist.*

A dispute now arose between two members, in which those dissatisfied with the decisions of the church, whether on the question relating to slavery, or that relating to the applicants for license, united on

* At about this time Mr. James Bruce was licensed.

one side, and pursued their object with all that violence which, we are sorry to say, had long been characteristic of their proceedings. The difficulty, as to form, was settled ; but the resentment of one of the parties, and of those combined with him, remained ; wherefore, finding that they could not control the church, they determined to leave it ;* accordingly, having increased their number to twenty-six, on the evening of the 26th of March, 1811, they laid before us a letter, requesting a dismission, to be constituted a church. In this letter (and which they had individually signed) they expressed the greatest christian affection, both for this church and its pastor : and assigned as their only reasons for asking a dismission, that they entertained views of discipline a little different from those of the church they addressed, and that they believed it would be for the glory of God that they should become a separate society.† The church, influenced by their apparent

* To secure their dismission, they professed to be reconciled, and to have the good of the church much at heart.

† Extract from their letter, dated "New-York, March 26, 1811."

"DEAR BRETHREN :

"We whose names are hereunto affixed, consider it a privilege in being permitted to address you in the endearing relation of brethren in our dear Lord Jesus Christ ; and cannot but rejoice when we contemplate the gracious act of him who has called us, we trust, with the same holy calling,

reconciliation, granted their request ; and, on the 10th of April following, they were constituted* under the name of Zoar.†

The difficulties of this church, however, which have occasioned so much noise in the world, are those which arose from the accusations brought against their pastor. What these accusations were, is well known ; no means having been spared to make them public, and to give them effect.

How much trouble, both internal and external, they have occasioned us, is known only to God. To him, therefore, we commit our cause, and with him we leave our enemies, praying, that if consistent

and hath made us experimentally one with him, notwithstanding our great unworthiness.

“ We also trust we feel thankful for the fresh and green pastures which our good Shepherd has prepared for all who are called to be saints, and especially that we have been made to participate with you in the enjoyment of them. We also feel a glow of gratitude and praise for feeling and witnessing the goodness of the great head of the church, in sending us our beloved pastor, Elder Wm. Parkinson, under whose ministry God has visited and refreshed our souls, with the word of his power and consolation.”

* For reasons best known to themselves, they chose the pastor of the church they left, and, as they reported to him, unanimously, to preach, and he preached accordingly, both at the opening of the house they hired, in Rose-street, as a place of worship, and on the occasion of their constitution.

† This church dissolved in less than one year.

with his purpose, they may yet become the subjects of that repentance which is unto life ; or, if he have otherwise determined, still we leave them with him, “ seeing that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble his people.” See 2 Thess. 1 : 6.

For a considerable time past, however, this church has enjoyed the greatest peace and harmony that can be calculated on in this imperfect state. And although it is not with us, a time of special animation, nor of abundant increase, yet we have much for which to be thankful ; our church meetings are solemn and pleasant ; we have a small addition almost every month : we witness, in a numerous congregation, a respectful attention to the word of life, and behold some who “ ask the way to Zion with their faces,” and, we trust, their hearts “ thitherward.”

In giving the history of this church, it will be expected that notice be taken of the churches and ministers that have proceeded from her.

The *churches* : of these, two have been mentioned already : the others, in the order in which they originated, are, the church at Peekskill,(a) the church at Stamford,(b) the Abyssinian church,(c)

(a) State of New-York : time of constitution unknown.

(b) Connecticut : constituted 1773.

(c) Meeting in Anthony-street, New-York : constituted July 5th.

the church at Newtown,(d) and the North Baptist church.(e)

The *ministers* : these, in the order in which they were ordained, are Thomas Ustick,(f) Ebenezer Ferris,(g) Isaac Skillman,(h) Stephen Gano,(i)

(d) Long-Island : constituted Sept. 12th.

(e) Meeting in Bud-street, New-York : constituted Nov. 13th, all in 1809.

The church on Staten Island also was in a great degree formed of persons who had belonged to this church. The other constituents of that church were chiefly called under the ministry of Elder Elkanah Holmes, who was one of the first and most useful ministers that have ever labored on Staten Island. He now resides in Upper Canada.

(f) Mr. Ustick was baptized in the 13th year of his age. The dates of his license and ordination we have not learned. He was educated at Rhode Island college, under president Manning. Life of Gano, p. 91. He was many years the pastor of the First Baptist church in Philadelphia, where he died, April 18th, 1803, aged about 50 years.

(g) Mr. Ferris was dismissed, with others, to constitute the church at Stamford, Nov. 1st, 1773. He was licensed by that church, and has been, for many years, their pastor.

(h) Mr. [afterward Dr.] Skillman was a native of New-Jersey, and a graduate of Princeton college. He was baptized and received a member of this church June 16, 1771. He was 14 years the pastor of the Second Baptist church in Boston. He then returned to his native state, and became pastor of the church at Salem, where he died but a few years since. See Dr. Baldwin's sermon at the opening of the new meeting house of the 2d church, Boston, preached Jan. 1, 1811, p. 27.

(i) Dr. Gano is a son of the venerable proto-pastor of this

Thomas Montanye,(*k*) Cornelius P. Wyckoff,(*l*)
James Bruce,(*m*) John Seger.(*n*)

church. He was bred a physician. He was baptized April 2, 1785; soon after licensed to preach, and on August 2, 1786, ordained. He has been for many years, the pastor of the First Baptist church in Providence, R. I.

(*k*) Mr. Montanye is a son of Elder Benjamin Montanye, pastor of the Baptist church at the Deer Park, state of New-York. He was licensed Dec. 5, 1787. He was several years pastor of the church at Warwick, state of N. York, and is now pastor of the church at Southampton, Penn.

(*l*) Mr. Wyckoff was baptized Dec. 6, 1807; licensed June 21, 1808, and ordained the 9th of Nov. following. He is pastor of the North Baptist church in this city.

(*m*) Deceased. The life of Mr. Bruce, though very short, embraced so many changes, and these in such swift succession, as to render it remarkable: He was born Oct. 20, 1791. At the usual age he was bound an apprentice to a watch-maker. In the 15th year of his age, Dec. 7, 1806, he was baptized, on profession of faith in Christ: Oct. 17, 1809, he was licensed to preach, though under some restrictions, being an apprentice. The expectations, however, of his usefulness in the ministry, were so great, that his friends interested themselves in his behalf, and raised, by subscription, \$500, the sum which his master agreed to take for the remainder of his time. His freedom being obtained, he received a full license, and on the 21st of June, 1810, he was ordained, being then but in the 18th year of his age. He took the pastoral charge of the Baptist church on Staten Island, at whose request he had been ordained; there he had several seals to his ministry, whom he baptized; but falling into a consumption he served the church but about one year, when, on the 15th of April, 1811, in the 19th year of his age, he fell asleep,

The largest number of which this church has, at any time, consisted, was 564 : this was in the spring of 1809 : and after dismissing 86 to form new churches, and several who have removed to the country, besides those taken away by death, and those separated from us by dismissal and exclusion, we remain, in number, about 480.

Now, having, in some manner, noticed both the circumstances which led to the constitution of this church, and those which have marked its progress, I come to make some improvement, from the text and the occasion.

Did Samuel erect a monument to perpetuate the memory of Jehovah's goodness to ancient Israel? He did; is it not then the duty of christians, and particularly of christian ministers, to use the best means in their power, to preserve the recollection of divine mercies to the gospel church; especially, to those branches thereof with which they are severally connected? We think it is; and, under a sense of this duty, I, with some care and labor, have col-

it is hoped, in Jesus. Mr. Bruce was married to Susan, the only daughter of Mr. Christopher Halstead, of this city, and left one child, a son, who bears his own name. His widow has lately been married to Capt. John G. Clark, of New Rochelle.

(n) Mr. Seger was licensed March 7, 1809; and ordained Jan. 7, 1813. He remains a member of this church. As his ordination has taken place since the delivery of this sermon, his name, of course, was not then mentioned.

lected the several parts of information concerning this church, which have now been communicated. Many things, probably, of which some expected to hear, have been omitted, either as being deemed unimportant, or to avoid an accumulation of matter beyond the limits of a sermon. Other events, for the same reasons, have been mentioned, without noticing all the circumstances which led to them. And if, in any instances, facts have been represented, not altogether correctly, I have the satisfaction to know that it hath not been done designedly ; having always had recourse to the best means of information, and having invariably aimed at truth.

Was it the design of Samuel, that the Ebenezer which he reared should excite in the Israelites, whenever they viewed it, gratitude and praise to their great Deliverer? It evidently was. O that these my feeble labors may, under the divine blessing, have that effect upon the members of this church ! If so, my beloved brethren and sisters, you will, not only at the present hearing, but also at every review of the mercies now enumerated, adopt the language of the text, and in glowing gratitude say, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

In the use of these words

1. We imply that, like the Israelites, we have experienced a state of warfare ; and which we have, both as individuals and as a society. As individuals we have had, in common with other christians, to

combat indwelling sin, a tempting devil, and an ensnaring world. And as a society, this church, as appears from the preceding history, has experienced many internal commotions and external attacks; and some of them of a very singular nature, and productive of more than ordinary tribulation.

2. We acknowledge, with Israel, that our support hath been, not of ourselves, but of the Lord; *the Lord hath helped us*. This acknowledgment we have individually, had frequent occasions to make. How often has each, on reviewing conflicts with the propensities of an evil heart, and the stratagems of Satan and the world, had reason to say, these enemies of my soul had gained the victory, but *the Lord helped me!* The ordinary means through which the Lord helps, that is, strengthens and encourages his people, are his word and ordinances: nevertheless, most of them have to acknowledge his help also, by remarkable dispensations of his providence and special operations of his Spirit: *by remarkable dispensations of his providence*: some by dispensations which either removed them from temptation, or prevented them from sinning; others by dispensations which either kept them from taking measures which would have involved them in trouble, or being involved, marvellously delivered them; and others by dispensations which either preserved or furnished to them the necessities of life, when all their efforts failed and all their hopes had fled: *by special opera-*

tions of his Spirit; operations by which his perfections and promises were seasonably impressed upon their minds. How often, believer, when on the verge of giving way, either to despondency or immorality, has the thought, "Thou, God, seest me," prevented! How frequently, also, when sinking under present trials, or under the prospect of trials approaching, has the address, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness," checked your unbelief and made you feel "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might?" As a church, also, we have abundant reason to make the same acknowledgment; for, to use the language of the psalmist, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us." Psalm 124 : 2, 3.

3. We acknowledge, not only that the Lord hath helped us, but moreover, that his help hath been incessant: *hitherto*, all the way, every step, and every moment, *hath the Lord helped us*. Have we endured tribulation? The Lord hath strengthened us: have we experienced deliverance? The Lord hath wrought it: have we had occasions of rejoicing? The Lord hath furnished them: and, if we have had hearts prepared for thanksgiving, the Lord hath prepared them; for "the preparation of the heart," as well as every other blessing, "is from the Lord."

But if the Lord hath thus helped us *hitherto*, then

1. Let us not look to any other helper for the time to come. This was often the God-provoking sin of Israel. How frequently and how marvellously did God deliver them ! yet how prone were they to "look to Egypt for help," and to "trust in an arm of flesh," yea, in dumb idols ! O that we may never be left to act in like manner !

2. Let us be careful never to distrust his favor. Why should we ? Hath he ever been unto us as a *barren wilderness* or a *land of darkness* ?(a) Or hath he ever been unmindful of his word on which he had caused us to hope ?(b) On the contrary, hath he not often exceeded our largest expectations, and even astonished us with displays of his favor, both in temporal and spiritual things ? We have also the strongest assurances of his presence and support for time to come ; he is saying to every believer, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,"(c) and, "as thy days, so shall thy strength be :"(d) to indulge distrust is, therefore, a base requital of his mercy, and even an impudent challenge of his veracity ; yea, it is to repose less confidence in *him*, than we do in a fellow creature ; for *even a man* whose friendship and faithfulness we have long experienced, we think worthy of our confidence, that is, in a sense and to a degree consistent with frail nature ; and if he have giv-

(a) See Jer. 2 : 31. (b) See Psal. 119 : 49.

(c) Heb. 13 : 5. (d) Deut. 33 : 25.

en us a promise, and possess the means of accomplishing it, we expect the favor promised. How much more should we believe God, with whom it is *impossible* to lie, and, in the proper use of means, look for all we need from him, who, with heaven and earth at his command, is saying, "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."^(e) Difficulties may be great; but, "is any thing too hard for the Lord?"^(f) Times may be trying; but they are all in the hand of the Lord, and in him, therefore, we are exhorted to "trust at all times."^(g) Circumstances may be perplexing, but all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.^(h) Let each believer, then, recollect the injunction, "commit thy way unto the Lord,"⁽ⁱ⁾ and, in humble, holy confidence, say, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me."^(k) As a church, let us adopt the language of triumphant Israel: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams

(e) Psal. 34 : 10. (f) Gen. 18 : 14.

(g) Psal. 31 : 15, and 62 : 8. (h) Rom. 8 : 28.

(i) Psal. 37 : 6. (k) Ibid. 138 : 8.

whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her ; [the church ;] she shall not be moved ; God shall help her, and that right early." Psal. 46 : 1—5.

Brethren, do you need additional excitements to perseverance ? recollect the cause you have espoused is the cause of God, and therefore must inevitably succeed ; the warfare in which you are engaged is that in which Jesus bled, and yet, bleeding, overcame ; the enemies you oppose are the enemies of Jehovah, and will, therefore, most certainly be subdued. Do you contend with sin ? "It shall not have dominion over you ;"(l)—with Satan ? "The God of peace shall bruise him under your feet shortly ;"(m)—with the allurements of the world ? "The fashion of this world passeth away,"(n) and "the works that are therein shall be burnt up."(o) Victory ! Victory ! on the part of Zion, remember, is certain ; for God hath said unto her, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper ; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."(p) Nor can the conflict be long. Here I am reminded of an address to ancient Israel, which I think not inapplicable, my brethren, to you : "Your fathers, where are they ?"(q) But

(l) Rom. 6 : 14.

(m) Rom. 16 : 20.

(n) I Cor. 7 : 31.

(o) 2 Pet. 3 : 10.

(p) Isai. 54 : 17.

(q) Zech. 1 : 5.

about half a century hath elapsed since the constitution of this church; yet not even one person who was a member *then*, remains a member *now*. Where are they? With the exception only of one,* they are gone to eternity; and, we trust, through grace to glory. Many also of those added since the constitution, have already been called from the church *militant* to the church *triumphant*. And you who remain are hastening to give place to another generation, both in the church and in the world. Some of you already exhibit strong marks of decaying nature; and, in a few years at most (afflicting thought to those who shall remain!) your sage advice will no longer direct the councils, nor your silver locks grace the assemblies of this church and society. May your last days be your best days! may you "come to the grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season!"(†) and while the afflicted church shall be lamenting their loss, may you be adoring before the throne of God!

Others of you are, it is true, yet in the vigor of your days: nevertheless, be not dismayed under the anticipation of remaining trials: 'many trials that you anticipate may never occur; and what though all you anticipate, and thousands more should be realized; a covenant God can and will sustain you under them,

* Samuel Edmunds; see p. 10.

(†) Job. 5 : 26.

and make you triumphant over them. Some of you, probably, like many who have gone before, will be called at noon ; called from the field of labor and conflict, to the mansion of repose ; and from the scorching sun of persecution and tribulation, to the inexhaustible fountain of living waters. For Zion's sake, however, it is desirable that many, and, if agreeable to the Divine purpose, all of you might be continued "to a good old age" in the church below. Nor should the prospect thereof discourage you ; for human life, at its greatest length, is likened but to a span, and its rapidity to that of a weaver's shuttle. How soon will it have past away ! Remember, then, my dear young brethren and sisters, that soon you will be viewed as the fathers and mothers in this our Israel ; and consequently, that soon the care and government of this church will devolve upon you. Under this impression, permit me to exhort you to be much engaged in searching the scriptures, and in praying to God for an understanding of them, that you may possess the requisite knowledge of doctrine and discipline ; also that you study to keep your conversation garments unspotted, to be *grave, sober-minded, kindly affectioned*, and yet *faithful one to another* ; that you endeavor to learn by the sufferings and deliverances of this church, which you have witnessed ; and by the steady, uniform, and scriptural course of discipline which she has pursued : that so, *in knowledge, in purity, and in faithfulness*, you may

be examples to those who shall, hereafter, be as your children in church relation. For your encouragement, recollect that at every stage of your pilgrimage, and finally, at the close of life, it will be your privilege as well as your duty to say, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

In the address to ancient Israel, already noticed, it is not only asked, “Your *fathers*, where are they?” but also “The *prophets*, do they live for ever?” that is, in this world. No ; so neither do your pastors ; your venerable *Gano* and your learned *Foster*, have long since laid by their trumpets and received their crowns ; and the period is advancing on the rapid current of time, when your poor servant who now addresses you, shall also finish his labors, and bid adieu to the sanctuary of God on earth. He, however, who hath “obtained gifts for men,” and who hath hitherto supplied you, can supply you still ; may he ever furnish you “a pastor after his own heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding !”

A few words to the congregation.—Beloved hearers, think, O think, how many of your acquaintance who once attended with you here, have gone to their eternal home : alas, how many without having given any evidence of regeneration ! You are yet spared ; for what purpose God only knows. O that it may yet appear to have been, that your precious souls might so hear as to live ! Many of you have been

attendants here from early life ; some of you have attended until you have seen your children, and in a few instances, your children's children, attend with you ; yea, some of them become members of the church ; but still (sad consideration) you are without, and many of you, it is to be feared, are still dead in sin. May God, that quickeneth the dead, make you alive to himself, and fit you for a place in the spiritual building ! Many of you, both old and young, have been abundantly liberal in the temporalities of this church, and friendly and useful under our various sufferings ; for these favors please to accept our unfeigned thanks, and permit us to say, we love you, and long for your salvation. O that you may not be like those who aided in the labor of building the ark, and yet perished in the flood !

To conclude ; may this church continue parallel with time itself—may she ever see her foes disappointed, and her friends prospered,—may she enjoy many and great effusions of the Holy Spirit,—receive into her bosom frequent and numerous accessions of the Lord's elect,—and, on her way to heaven, participate the glory of the millennial kingdom. At every return of her Jubilee, may her pastor continue her history ; and may every succeeding record contain less of the painful and more of the pleasing ; especially, may there ever be found in her members a heart to say, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us ;* until “ the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with

the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ;” and then, her members that shall have remained on earth being changed, and those that shall have fallen asleep being raised, may she, in all her successive generations and mingling in the general assembly of the Lord’s redeemed, enter the gates, inherit the joys, and assist the songs of the heavenly Jerusalem ! Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen and Amen.

A
S E R M O N,

DELIVERED IN

THE MEETING HOUSE

OF THE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK,

AUGUST 20th, 1812.

BEING A DAY RECOMMENDED BY THE AUTHORITIES OF THE
NATION AS A DAY OF

SPECIAL HUMILIATION AND PRAYER,

ON ACCOUNT OF

THE PRESENT WAR.

By WM. PARKINSON, A. M., Pastor.

"He maketh wars to cease," &c. *Psalm* xli. 9.

NEW-YORK:
RE-PUBLISHED BY A FRIEND.
John Gray, Printer.
1846.

SERMON ON WAR.

1 CHRONICLES 5:18—22.

18. The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, *were* four and forty thousand seven hundred and three-score, that went out to the war.

19. And they made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur and Nephish, and Nodab.

20. And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that *were* with them; for they cried to God in the battle, and he was entreated of them, because they put their trust in him.

21. And they took away their cattle; of their camels fifty thousand, and of their sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand, and of men an hundred thousand.

22. For there fell down many slain, because the war *was* of God. And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity.

This piece of sacred history records the parties and circumstances of an ancient war.

The *parties* on the one side, the *Israelites*, who were the descendants of *Jacob*, and on the other side, the *Hagarites*, who were the posterity of *Ishmael*, but called Hagarites, after *Hagar*, Ishmael's mother. The branches of each family that were engaged in the war are particularly named. Of the family of Jacob, "the sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh;" who all lived together

on the east of Jordan, and who are said to have been “valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war.” v. 18. And of the family of Ishmael, or the Hagarites, “*Jetur*, and *Nephish*, and *Nodab*,”* that is the posterity of these men, and who were the sons of Ishmael. Gen. 25 : 15.

The *Circumstances* :

1. “The war *was* of God.” v. 22.
2. It was waged on the part of God’s Israel; “they made war.” &c. v. 19.
3. The forces engaged were very unequal; of the Israelites, 44,760, v. 18, and of the Hagarites, probably three times that number; for, besides 100,000 of them taken prisoners, “there fell down many slain.” v. 21, 22. Yet
4. The conquest was on the side of Israel. v. 20.
5. The conquest was given them by divine interposition; “they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hands, and all that were with them;” that is all their possessions. *Ibid*.

* Nodab is supposed to be the same with Kedemah, mentioned with Jetur and Nephish in the place referred to in Genesis.—Dr. Gill in loc. Or perhaps he was the same with Nebaioth, Ishmael’s eldest son. Gen. 25 : 13. For as it is not certain that any people, in scripture, are named after him, it is probable that they who in heathen writers are called Nabathæi were his descendants. So Dr. Jackson and Bs. Patrick.

6. The success of Israel was in answer to prayer :
 “for they cried to God in the battle, and he was entreated of them, because they put their trust in him.”

Ibid.

7. What the providence of God delivered to Israel, they took ; and which furnishes an example of what may be lawfully done in a lawful war. They took *men*,—of these 100,000, which alone was near 5000 more than twice the whole number of the army of Israel. They took *property*,—of camels 50,000, of sheep 250,000, and of asses 2000, v. 21. They took possession also of the enemy’s *territory*, “and dwelt in their steads until the captivity.” v. 22.

As the text is entirely historical, the remarks already made must serve both for exposition and introduction.

The subject, of which the text is a history, observe, is WAR, and therefore, confessedly, a very extraordinary one to be discussed in the palace of the Prince of Peace. But, if the subject be extraordinary, so also the time and the occasion. We are assembled in a time of war, and agreeably to the recommendation of the constituted authorities of our country, for special humiliation and prayer. *Humiliation* for our sins which have contributed to the common mass of national guilt, for which our country is visited ; and *prayer*, that God, the only proper object of our hope, would interpose his mercy and power in behalf of these United States. Nor is it the design

of the speaker, by any means to increase, but by all means to moderate that flame of contention which, among our citizens, already burns—nor to provoke to greater outrage, but if possible, in some measure to conciliate those parties which, to the great injury of our country, and the triumph of its enemies, already exist.

In the prosecution of this design, it is proposed to show,

I. That such evils accompany war, as make it always to be deprecated.

II. That, notwithstanding these evils, a nation may be so treated by another, as to justify, on her part, a declaration of war, and that the same cannot be avoided consistently with her dignity, her safety, or even her independence.

III. What concern God has in war: “The war was of God,” and

IV. What measures, especially in a moral point of view, are proper for a nation to take in relation to war—when exempted from it—when threatened with it—and when involved in it.

I. That such evils accompany war, as make it always to be deprecated.

War necessarily occasions an increase of taxation. This, in a free country is, to be sure, the less oppressive by being only *internal*,—and under an elective and representative government like ours,

still less so, by being *voluntary*, both the ratio of the tax and the articles subject to it, being determined by men chosen by the people. Nevertheless, the revenue must be collected, and, of course, the burden felt.

War occasions, inevitably, an interruption of commerce; and thus while it increases expense, both public and private, it also lessens the means of defraying it. In times of war, the produce of the country has chiefly, if not wholly, but an internal consumption, and consequently the harvests of the husbandman either remain in his granaries, or are vend- ed at a price not equivalent, either to his toils or his expenses. The ships of the merchant, if not appropriated to the purposes of war, are in a state either of perpetual hazard abroad, or of decay at home. And the honest mechanic, with perhaps a numerous as well as dependent family, is without employ, or employed at wages, not adequate to the support of himself, and those dependent on him.

These evils, though considerable, are nevertheless small when compared with others arising from the same source.

A separation of the nearest relatives, and loss of the choicest comforts of natural, civil, and social life, are among the invariable concomitants of *war*. Think for a moment of such a number of our valuable citizens, of different ranks and ages, and from all parts of the union, as would be requisite to constitute

an army and a navy sufficient to contend with a potent enemy—think of these taking leave of their homes and connexions for the place of danger. How affecting the objects that are presented to view!—Whole families bathed in tears, and overwhelmed in grief!—Nor dare we disapprove;—the occasion demands it—at least the sensibility and sympathy of parents, wives, and sisters, sufficiently account for it—and even the brave soldier, or the valiant officer must be excused should he drop a tear.

This still is but as the “beginning of sorrows.” For leaving their families to the inconveniences, griefs, and anxieties naturally resulting from their bereavement, we must now spend a thought on the toils, the dangers, and the apprehensions of our beloved fellow citizens, gone, as with their lives in their hands, to fight our battles, and maintain our rights. See them encountering either the hazards of the conflicting elements upon the mighty ocean, or the rigors of the various seasons, in long and fatiguing marches by land. Or view them actually engaged in battle, and facing ten thousand shafts of death! How eventful the hour! Ah! ye fond connexions left behind, could ye witness the bloody conflict, how would your hearts beat with painful expectation! The sanguinary scene is past;—and perhaps thousands of immortal souls are hurried to the bar of God, to give an account for “the deeds done in the body.” This, were it but once to occur, would be im-

portant ;—but probably it must be often, very often repeated, before the balance of national power be decided, the murderous process terminated, and the instruments of death again immured.

War, especially when, like that of the American revolution and most of the modern wars in Europe, it inundates the country, always becomes an interruption of public worship, and an obstacle to learning and science, and the cultivation and improvement of all the useful arts. Houses of worship and seminaries of learning, are, under such circumstances, commonly closed and abandoned ; and if taken by the enemy, usually converted into barracks for soldiers, or perhaps stables for horses. That such was the fate of public buildings in this and other cities on our continent, during the revolutionary war, is well recollected by many in this assembly.

War, moreover, is a fruitful source of almost all manner of wickedness. Not to speak of that flood of immorality which commonly attends an army, and which more or less disseminates its baneful influence among all classes of society, war has its very origin in wickedness : “ Whence come wars and fightings among you ? Come they not hence even of your lusts ? ” Jas. 5 : 1. As between individuals or families, so between nations, whenever war occurs, there must be, on one side at least, an egregious departure from equity and justice, and which can only proceed from the lusts of the human heart ; such as

resentment, envy, and jealousy; restless ambition, false glory, wantonness of power, or perhaps a mere thirst for dominion. When these lusts predominate, right is forgotten, national charters are disregarded, and the most solemn treaties wantonly violated. Yes, to gratify these detestable passions, armies, consisting of thousands, have been deliberately sacrificed, and multitudes, which no man can number, have been precipitately launched into the world of spirits. Alas, how many into the world of misery!

When these, and many other evils that might be mentioned, as accompanying war, are duly considered, surely no one can doubt that war is always to be deprecated. Nevertheless, I proceed to show,

II. That a nation may be so treated by another, as to justify, on her part, a declaration of war, and that the same cannot be avoided, consistently with her dignity, her safety, and even her independence.

In this dilemma a nation is involved when another, in reference to her, violates,—perseveringly violates, the law of nations. This law I define thus:—*It is the common consent of civil authorities, from time immemorial, that all free and independent nations possess equal rights and are entitled to equal privileges.* By this consent nations are constituted a society, differing only as to magnitude, from that which obtains among individual free men. Hence, as among individuals, so among nations equally free and sovereign, no one can claim the right of dictating another;

nor do it, without violating, as in the one case the law of civil society, so in the other that of national usage.

Suppose, for the sake of illustration,* that one man, though free, should presume to enjoin his will upon another equally free,—suppose he should say to him, You shall neither buy nor sell at such or such a market;—or, finding him on the highway, going to or returning from market, he should forcibly take away his property and injure his person:—Or suppose that, seeing him in the pursuit of some profitable business, he should tell him, You shall pursue that business no longer; perhaps because he is in it himself and wishes to monopolize the profits; or possibly, because he is so circumstanced as not to be able to engage in it, and therefore grudges his neighbor the advantage. Again, suppose he should fancy it to be the duty of this man whom he has undertaken to control, to be the enemy of every man to whom *he* is an enemy, and should treat the man himself as an enemy when he thinks and acts otherwise:—or, supposing that, envying the peace and prosperity of this certain man, he should employ his influence, by secret missions, bribery, &c., to move his neighbors to commit depredations upon his property, or to excite his own family to mutiny;—in fine,

* This mode of illustration, it is hoped, will be excused by those who do not need it.

suppose him to demand of this man, as a matter of superior right, any act whatever, as a token of inferiority or submission :—suppose, I say, any one of the things mentioned, and you suppose what is a violation of the common rights of free men. Can you then for a moment hesitate as to the duty of the citizen thus insulted !—thus injured !—If, indeed, he possess no means of self-defence—no means of teaching his insolent neighbor his duty, and of showing to others that he is a free man, then, to be sure, he must peaceably submit. And if so, where his dignity, his safety, and his freedom ? They no longer exist. But, if the requisite means be at his command, then say you, and I believe with united voice, let him avail himself of them—let him, without a moment's delay, repel the attacks of the lawless usurper, and assert and maintain his own rights.

The application to nations is perfectly convenient. If among the society of nations equally free and sovereign, any one presume to make her will the rule of another's conduct ; if, for instance, she prohibit, or attempt to prohibit, a free and neutral sister, the right of trade, at any port not legally blockaded and in articles not contraband ;—if she authorize, or (unremunerated) permit her armed vessels to molest the merchant ships of her peaceable sister,—especially to plunder her property, and either to kill or to impress her seamen ;—if she attempt any monopoly, or even any superior right upon the high seas, which,

not only by the law of nations, but also of nature and of nature's God, are equally free to all;—if she use her influence by any means to excite the neighbors of a sister nation to acts of aggression against her, or to promote among her own people, disaffection to her government, and disunion of her members;—if, I say, a nation do these things, then is she guilty of conduct similar to that supposed of a wicked, haughty, and domineering individual, and is worthy of the same treatment to which, in your minds, that individual hath been already adjudged.

Now, how far the conduct of Great Britain toward this country, for at least five years past, hath assimilated her to such an individual, I leave you, my fellow-citizens, to think for yourselves, claiming to myself, as a free man, the right of doing the same. But supposing the similitude to be appropriate, and that the acts *supposed*, have been really *committed*:—can there, under such a supposition, a single doubt remain as to the course which this country, in return, ought to have pursued? If, indeed, these insults and depredations had not been repeated—had they not been often repeated,—and had not a disposition been manifested, still to repeat them, it might have been well, on the part of this country, to have forborne. But having given no provocation to such treatment, having used, in vain, all honorable means to prevent it, and having already sustained considerable loss, not only of property and reputation, but

even of blood ; and this, all this, having been wantonly continued, until hope had become folly, and delay subjection ; there remained, of course, for our insulted, injured country, but two objects of choice : —Either she must tamely and dastardly submit to the dictates and oppressions of imperious Britain, and so make, at once, a surrender of her rights, and an acknowledgment that she is no longer free ; or, in the noble spirit of '76, call together her patriotic sons—vest them with authority—furnish them with arms, and say to them, Go,—go by sea and land,—go vindicate my rights, avenge my wrongs, and maintain my LIBERTY, the bounteous gift of heaven, and the invaluable price of your fathers' blood. The former she has nobly disdained,—the latter, by her constituted authorities, she has honorably, solemnly, and seasonably done. Nor was ever a mother's mandate more promptly obeyed. No sooner had it reached the ears of her free-born sons, than her flag was seen waving from every principal port on her meandering coast, and her standard planted, with her banner unfurled, at many of the principal avenues to the enemy, on her extensive frontier. And for what purpose ? Not to invade the rights of others, but to protect her own : and to do which, we are taught, not only by the impulse of nature and the dictate of reason, but by the voice of Revelation itself :*—yea, not

* 2 Chron. 20 : 15.

to do it, were to sanction the vices of a rapacious foe, and to pour contempt on the favors of God. This, however, will become more evident, while I attempt to show

III. What concern God has in war. “The war *was* of God.” *Text.*

His concern in this, as in all human affairs, though not always manifest, at least not in the same degree, yet always exists. And that not merely “as in him we live, and move, and have our being;”* but also, as by him all our changes are meted:—“God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.”† “I,” saith he, “form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things.”‡ However strange, it is nevertheless evident, that God, for reasons *certainly* known, *only* to himself, did, at an early period of the world, discover that his secret arrangements, in relation to the human family, provided for war: hence the remarkable government which he gave to the ancient Hebrews,—a government in which all the males of Israel, able to bear arms, were, by divine command, divided, under several captains, into companies of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens; ready for the field, whenever the circumstances of the nation rendered it necessary. Shall this be urged as furnishing an example of a standing army? Certainly not,

* Acts 17 : 28.

† Psalm 75 : 7.

‡ Isaiah 45 : 7.

without either much ignorance or much sophistry. For the Israelites were not, like a standing army, a *standing expense*, and a *standing nuisance* to the nation; nor, like that, an *engine* at the command of a lawless tyrant, to impose *his will* upon the people. No; but rather like an enrolled and well regulated *militia*,—in peace, pursuing their civil employments and defraying their own expenses, and yet bestowing so much attention on the cultivation of military skill, as to be ready, on any emergency, to repair to the theatre of action. I am aware that it may be said, that God, in the arrangements made for war among the ancient Hebrews, had a mystical design;—that the warlike state of the Hebrews was to prefigure that of the gospel church; and that the wars they were commanded to wage, and the conquests they were enabled to gain, were typical of the wars which we are commanded to wage with our spiritual enemies, and the conquests which, through grace, we are encouraged to expect. All this is readily granted. But were the Hebrews influenced by these considerations? Or did they not rather act from the common motives which influence soldiers? or, at most, from a sense of present duty;—while the mystical design remained to be understood by the gospel church, under the superior light of the gospel dispensation.* So, no doubt, God has had a design

* Eph. 6 : 11—17.

no less important and no less worthy of himself, in all the wars, both ancient and modern, since the commencement of this dispensation; nevertheless, that design remains to be understood by the church in the greater light of her millennial glory, or perhaps not fully until she arrives in heaven.*

That God has a concern in war, appears in its commencement, its progress, and its termination.

In its *commencement*. That he had such a concern in that war of which our text is a record, is plainly asserted: "The war *was* of God." In this, however, as in all other events which give occasion for the exercise of human corruptions, we must always distinguish between these corruptions and God's control of them. War, as already noticed, proceeds, on the part of men, from their lusts; nevertheless, even these, in their propensity to war, as to every other outrage, are subject to the overruling power of God, as much as the elements of nature; and his address to the raging ocean, is no less applicable to depraved man: "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further;—here shall thy proud waves be stayed."† "The king's heart," and so the heart of every human ruler and of every human being, "is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it whithersoever he will."‡ Hence,

* Matt. 24 : 6, 7. Rev. 19 : 17, 18. Isai. 30 : 26. John 13 : 7.

† Job 38 : 11.

‡ Prov. 21 : 1.

Sometimes when men determine *war*, God prevents it ; either by checking their lusts, or frustrating their designs.*

At other times, he not only permits in his holy providence, circumstances to occur, which call those corruptions into exercise, but also leaves men to pursue their dictates, either to conquest or to ruin, as he, in his righteous sovereignty may have determined.†

And there are also instances in which, either by a strange concurrence of providences, or by some mysterious, ineffable and inconceivable impulse upon the minds of men, God manifests his concern in *war*, by actually stimulating to it : “ The God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser, kings of Assyria,” to make *war* against Israel.—1 Chron. 5 : 26. Do we find our hearts rising in opposition to such sovereignty ? Let it remind us that we are depraved, and are not yet in due submission to HIM, who is saying, “ Be still, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46 : 10.

As God has a concern in the commencement, so also in the *progress* of *war*—which is long or short, severe or moderate, according to his sovereign control.

* 1 Sam. 23 : 7—17, and 25 : 26, 34, and 1 Kings 12 : 22—24.

† 1 Sam. 4 : 9, 10 ; 2 Chron. 35 : 20—24 ; Deut. 1 : 42—44.

As the hearts of all are in his hand, he imboldens or intimidates them at pleasure.*

As “unto” him “belong the issues from death.” Psalm 68 : 20. It cannot be reasonably doubted that the shafts of battle, as well as of disease, are all directed by his sovereign hand. Witness the stone from David’s sling, which prostrated the vaunting Philistine, and the arrow from the “bow, which a certain man drew at a venture,” but which, divinely directed, penetrated,—fatally penetrated “the king of Israel between the joints of the harness.”† Yea, if not a sparrow, much less a man, can fall to the ground without his will. Matt. 10 : 29.

Besides ; as at all times and places in common, the destinies of all men and of all nations are in his power,‡ so undoubtedly, in times of war, and at the place of battle. If not, why the exhortation, “Trust ye in him at all times ?” Psalm 62 : 8,—or why did God himself say to Israel, “The battle is not yours, but God’s.” 2 Chron. 20 : 15.

Nor is the concern which God has in the *war*, any less manifest in its *termination*. “He maketh wars to cease.” Psalm 46 : 9. And, as of him is the decision of the contest so also the disposal of the conquest. “The battle is the Lord’s.” 1 Sam. 17 : 47. Men,

* 2 Chron. 20 : 29, and 2 Kings 7 : 6.

† 1 Sam. 17 : 49 ; 1 Kings 22 : 34.

‡ 2 Chron. 20 : 6 ; Psalm 31 : 15.

indeed, commonly view these events as depending wholly on the comparative numbers and military skill of the forces engaged ; or, if any thing extraordinary occur, they attribute it usually to mere chance ; but in reality, they are like the lot, "The whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Prov. 16 : 33. That "the battle," as remarked by the wise man, "is not to the strong," i. e. not always, or not merely because strong, is evident from our text ; for the Israelites, compared with the Hagarites, were but few ; yet being "helped," divinely helped "against them, the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them," i. e. all their possessions. That these events, however, depend on divine interposition, no one surely can doubt, who for a moment reviews them in relation to the revolutionary war in this country ; for then, to use the language of scripture, "One chased a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight ;" and why ? Because the *war*, like that recorded in the text, *was of God*. He moved our fathers to engage in it—he conducted them through the whole process, and he crowned them with victory and triumph.

From the consideration of the concern which God has in war, I proceed to show,

IV. What measures, especially in a moral point of view, are proper for a nation to take in relation to war,—when exempted from it—when threatened with it, and when involved in it.

First. When exempted from it.

During such times, the greatest care should be taken to preserve neutrality. To this the situation of the United States is peculiarly favorable ; being so widely separated by water from every other nation, from which a war of any consequence could be apprehended. The principles of neutrality are often violated by presumptuous individuals : but this evil it is in the power of government easily to remedy, by chastisement and remuneration. O that proud England had done this ! Then had not our government, at this time, been driven to the last, the lamentable resort of injured nations.

While exempt from war, it is of primary importance in preserving the blessings of peace, that the people preserve unity of sentiment on the principal measures of government : strict adherence to the constitution, *the great charter of national rights*, and a proper submission to “ the powers that be.”* It may indeed, often occur, that men in office act unworthy the trust reposed in them ; but, in such cases, the remedy lies not in faction, riot and defamation, but in elections. When these return, it is the privilege of the sovereign people to withhold their suffrages from those who have abused their confidence, and to give them to other and better men.

But, above all, a nation, while exempt from the

* Romans 13 : 1.

evils of war, should habitually acknowledge God as the author and preserver of the blessings of peace. When he is forgotten, and the blessings enjoyed are ascribed to the merit of the people—the management of rulers—military power—or, indeed to any cause whatever, short of divine goodness, there is reason to expect public trouble *at least*, and, without national reformation, the scourge of war. “If,” said God to the people of Israel, and which is not inapplicable to the people of these United States,—“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”* To this means of advancing either the prosperity, or the ruin of the nation, every individual may contribute, as he may contribute either to that morality, that “righteousness which exalteth a nation,” or to that immorality, that “sin which is the disgrace of any people.”† However, when the moral character of a nation is taken into view, there are two classes in the community which require a more than ordinary attention.

The one class intended, unites those who, in the providence of God, are called by the voice of the people, to transact the civil affairs of the nation; whether by enacting laws or administering government. And as the moral qualifications requisite in

* Isai. 1 : 19, 20.

† Prov. 14 : 34.

these men are so much the topic of popular clamor, it may be proper, on this occasion, in some measure, to investigate that subject.

It is contended by many, that they ought to be *religious* men. If by *religious* be meant *regenerate*, then is it indeed essential that they be religious men. Not, however, to qualify them to be statesmen; for as their work, in that capacity, is wholly of a natural and civil kind, so also the qualifications, requisite to perform it; but, in order to their *own eternal salvation*,—for God respects no man's person;—and “Except a man,” whether great or small, “be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3 : 3.

But is it not awfully to be feared, that the greater part of those who make such an outcry against statesmen, whom they deem irreligious, are themselves strangers to experimental religion; and that their ideas of religious men extend no further than to men who, by education or otherwise, are connected with some religious sect, attend public worship, and approach the Lord's table. But who does not discover that all this may be true of men, strangers to a work of grace upon the heart, and even of deists? That it is the duty of those who possess religion, to profess it, and the privilege of those who have been enabled to rely on the merits of Christ for salvation, to commemorate his sufferings in the ordinance of the supper, is heartily admitted; but to make a profes-

sion of religion, especially a partaking at the Lord's table, a test of qualification for civil office, is to hold out a strong, if not the strongest inducement to *hypocrisy* and *impiety*. Should it be said, *they ought to believe*; as well might it be said, *they ought to keep the whole moral law*, and so to be *perfect*.^{*} But duty and ability are two things. And whoever makes such an observation proves, to me, that he is an utter stranger to living faith, or he would know it to be, not at the command of the creature, but the *gift of God*, and a fruit of the Holy Ghost.[†] If it be said, that it is the duty of men in public life, to observe, and treat with respect, the externals of religion,[‡] it is only saying what I admit and contend is the duty of men in common. For the command of Christ,

* Matt. 22 : 37—40. † Eph. 2 : 8, and Gal. 5 : 22.

‡ Neglect of this duty hath been attributed to our Chief Magistrate, and to his worthy predecessor, and on which account they have been stigmatized as Deists. The charge is not true;^{*} and if it were, it could no more prove them to be deists, than neglect of the same duty proves many others to be so, who nevertheless stand high with their calumniators. Whether those great men thus abused, are subjects of grace or not, is known only to God; but of their being deists, I am bound to believe that there is no more evidence than of moral men in common being so, who make no profession of experimental religion.

* Thomas Jefferson constantly attended my ministry during the three years I was Chaplain to Congress.

“Search the scriptures,”* is binding on all, and the injunction on his ministers, “Preach the gospel to every creature,”† plainly implies the duty of every creature to attend where it is preached. But to contend, as many seem to do, that it is the duty of statesmen‡ to profess experimental religion, and to partake at the Lord’s table, to set an example to others, is to contend that it is their duty to be hypocrites, in order to influence others to be so, and to “eat and drink *damnation*,” that is *condemnation*, or *judgment*, or *guilt*,§ to themselves, that, by their example, they may teach others to do the same. From such hypocrisy and wickedness “good Lord deliver us!” That it is not the object of those who reason in that way, to induce the men now in office in the United States to become guilty of such crimes, that so they might peaceably retain their several stations, is readily admitted; for their object, on the contrary, is to have them removed: and why? Not, surely, because they refuse to be guilty of *hypocrisy* and *impiety*! No; but that they might fill the offices they

* John 5 : 39.

† Mark 16 : 15.

‡ That is, because statesmen; though they should be unregenerate.

§ 1 Cor. 11 : 27—29. From which scripture it is evident that faith is essential to an evangelical participation in that sacred ordinance, as without it none can discern the Lord’s body.

hold with men of different politics. Should they succeed, I pray God that they may not be permitted to substitute men already guilty, or who are capable of becoming guilty of such deception and iniquity, in order to secure their favor ! For of all men that might be put into power, such are the most dangerous.* Nor does *that*, in my humble opinion, necessarily follow, in the event of such a change ; for although our citizens have been, unhappily, long divided and distinguished by the appellations of *Federalist* and *Republican*, I have always thought, and now think, that there are men of equal integrity, abilities, and patriotism on both sides. And, indeed, the distinction itself is as unfounded as it is impolitic : for, under our government, no man can be a Federalist without being a Republican, nor a Republican, without being a Federalist ; the one having respect to the confederacy of the states, the other to the sovereignty of the people ; and both being comprehended in our excellent constitution.

* Even Gallio, who “ cared for none of these things,” better understood civil authority, and civil rights, and was more favorable to the Apostles than the Jews, especially the priests, who were great religionists. Acts 18 : 12—17. And if some in our country, who are called christian ministers, or others who adhere to them, were in power, how soon, alas, would the people be shackled with a religious, or rather, an irreligious establishment !

After begging forgiveness for so lengthy a digression, I come to offer my own opinion as to the moral qualifications that are desirable in statesmen, and the manner in which, *as such*, they ought to acknowledge God.

Their *moral qualifications*: They ought to be

1. Men of good morals, and

2. Men of liberal sentiments;—men rightly understanding and duly appreciating the natural and unalienable rights of conscience;—men who, though entitled, in common with other men, to the right of religious opinion, and the choice of religious society, yet claim no right to control the consciences of others, nor to dictate, in matters of religion, to their fellow-men.

The manner in which they, in their official capacity, ought to acknowledge God. This they should do

1. By submitting to him *alone*, the rights of conscience, and, consequently, leaving all sects and all individuals to worship him, in that way and manner which, to them, shall appear to be most acceptable unto him; provided, however, that nothing in their customs and manners shall interfere with the rights of others, nor with the peace and good order of civil society.

2. By discharging their official duties with an integrity becoming the solemnities under which they entered into office, and in which they called upon him to witness their obligations.

3. By acknowledging, at times of special emer-

gency, their need of his special direction, and requesting their constituents to unite with them in imploring it.

The *other* class of the community deserving special consideration, are professors of the christian religion. And our duties, my brethren, in relation to the subject before us, are concisely and specifically stated in these words of our blessed Master : “Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and unto God, the things that are God’s.” Matt. 22 : 21. That is, unto *civil authority*, render obedience in *civil things*, and unto God, *and to him only*, render obedience in *spiritual things*; that so while they attend to the duties of the one, they may not neglect those of the other. Christians should recollect that, as they “are the salt of the earth,” in common, so in particular of the nations in which they respectively dwell; and therefore that, as it is their duty to use all means to preserve peace and good order in the churches, with which they are connected, so also in the nations to which they belong. Especially they should be in the habit of returning thanks to God, as for all other blessings, so for the peace and prosperity of their nation, and of praying for “all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” 1 Tim. 2 : 2.

As there are certain measures in relation to war, proper to be taken by a nation when exempted from it, so

Secondly. When threatened with it. Here much

might be said as to erecting fortifications, preparing military stores, raising and arranging forces, &c., &c., but these I leave to statesmen, confining myself to what is of a moral nature, and which, therefore, comes more immediately within my province.

As *war*, like every other judgment, is procured by sin, the first act of a nation when threatened with it, should be *public humiliation*. And this, as all are equally concerned, ought to be as general as possible; and therefore it is proper that a day or days for that purpose be recommended by the national government. Not indeed to make it the duty of the people to fast and pray; for that is already done by the authority of God himself, and by the example of his ancient servants;* and if it were not, no human authority could make it so;† but to secure the object just mentioned, *unanimity*: that so, from all the worshipping assemblies in the nation, the cries of the saints may ascend in one common and united prayer to the throne of mercy, for pardon of accumulated guilt, and preservation from threatened evil. Such

* Zech. 8 : 19. Luke 5 : 35. Ezra 8 : 21—23. Jer. 36 : 9. Joel 2 : 15—18. This, indeed, like all other external acts of religion, may be enjoined and observed both by public and private persons, as a mere specious show of piety, and then it is an abomination to God. See 1 Kings 21 : 7—13. Isai. 58 : 2—7. Matt. 6 : 16. But the abuse of a duty can never nullify it.

† Matt. 15 : 9.

was the counsel of king Jehosaphat, and such the conduct of all Judea. 2 Chron. 20 : 3, 4.

But suppose the cloud should still thicken, and either submission or war become inevitable ; it is then the duty of the constituted authorities of the nation to act as recommended in the case supposed by Christ, Luke 14 : 31, 32, that is, *to consult* whether they possess a sufficient power to afford a reasonable probability of success, should they engage in war ; if not, let them propose peace, which is to be preferred on almost any terms, rather than a wanton and unsuccessful effusion of blood ; but if a sufficient force be at command to defend the rights, and preserve the property of themselves and their constituents, let them recommend an immediate appeal to arms, and let all the people heartily acquiesce.* Hence

Thirdly. The measures which, in relation to war, are proper for a nation to take, when involved in it. This, at least, as to form, is the present condition of these United States. And although I make no pretensions to special discernment, and much less to a spirit of prophecy, yet as I have uniformly said for seven years past, I still say, that, of war in this country, there will be little more than the form. This opinion is founded in the firm persuasion that all the

* This is plainly implied in the supposed case already alluded to.

modern wars that have occurred among the nations of the earth, are procured by that anti-christian abomination, a *union of church and state*; and as this abomination does not exist in our country, and is not provided for in our national constitution, so neither shall we share in the “overflowing scourge” which is designed to remove it. At Canada indeed it exists, and British squadrons under the sanction of it, are cruising on our coasts; and therefore it is within the limits of my opinion already expressed, that it may in those situations, occasion distress and bloodshed. And as it hath been attempted in some of our eastern states, what degree of trouble they may experience on account of it, I will not pretend to determine. Of this, however, I have no doubt, that all governments under heaven, in which that abomination has a being, must be shaken to their centre, and so changed in their forms, as to be no longer, as they now are, obstacles to the “free course” of the gospel, and the equal enjoyment of civil and religious liberty. The government of the Jews, which was originally a theocracy, became, indeed, by divine permission,* a monarchy; and the Jewish nation, with their two-fold officers of kings and priests, was, it is admitted, a figure of the gospel church; but then, as the antitype of their offerings was found in the *sacrifice*,† so *that* of their kings and priests in the *person*

* 1 Sam. 8 : 7.

† Heb. 9 : 11—14.

of the MESSIAH,* who is not only the substance of preceding shadows, but also at once “King in Zion,” and the great High Priest of our profession. Hence, as at his *death*, the Aaronic order and ceremonial service *of right* for ever ceased,† so *at his resurrection*,‡ the power and authority of all human kings. Nevertheless, as the ceremonies of the law were presumptuously persisted in by the Jews, until the destruction of Jerusalem, when it was no longer possible, the temple and its furniture being destroyed; so have the nations of the earth presumptuously persisted, and will continue so to persist, in the support of kings and kingly governments, until the effectual destruction of anti-christian power, both civil and ecclesiastical; and then shall be taken up that doleful lamentation, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, &c. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her,” &c., &c. Rev. 18 : 2, 3. §

But to return: However confident I feel that the present war will not prove an *overflowing scourge* to our country, I do not, on this account, wish any re-

* Heb. 4 : 14. Rev. 17 : 14.

† Dan. 9 : 24—29. Col. 2 : 14—17.

‡ This is probably the true sense of Rom. 1 : 4, power, meaning authority. See also Acts 2 : 22—36. Here he is at once made Lord and Christ, the ruler and the priest.

§ See also Ezek. 21 : 27. Daniel 7 : 9. Psalms 72 : 10.

laxation in the use of means ; for it is by these, I believe, that God will preserve us. And therefore, as Paul, although he had a vision from Heaven assuring him that there should be no loss of the crew, nevertheless said to the mariners, concerning means, “ except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved ;”^{*} so much more may I, having but a general view of the scriptures in support of my opinion, and being like men in common, liable to err, say to the rulers and people of our nation, *without the means of defence, ye cannot be secured from the evils threatened :* yea, to expect it, would be presumption. As to the means proper to be used, there can be no reasonable doubt.

A primary object with every citizen, public and private, in church and state, should be to promote union, and firmness in the support of government. “ A house,” a family—a nation “ divided against itself, cannot stand.”[†] On a disunion of the states and disaffection to the general government, the enemy chiefly relies. Whoever, therefore, contributes to these, contributes to the interest and encouragement of the common foe of our beloved country ; and is therefore no longer worthy the honorable distinction of an American citizen.

Means, though to be used, are not to be trusted in. God alone should be the object of our trust : so

^{*} Acts 27 : 31.

[†] Mark 3 : 25.

of Israel it is said in the text, "they trusted in him." Let us do likewise. He only can give that wisdom to our rulers, and that success to our forces, which are necessary to conquest.

And as he is to be trusted in, so also to be called upon; and that not only in common, nor only in common *during war*, but even in the time of battle: "they cried to God in the battle,"—nor did they cry in vain; "he was entreated of them; because they trusted in him." Prayer then for success of arms, is evidently lawful, and availing. It hath been offered by God's Israel, and answered by Israel's God. May we, and may all God's people in these United States abound in it! Then may we hope for a short war, and an advantageous peace.

To the declaration of war lately made, on the part of our government, we all know there are many objections. But when we consider whence they come;—that from the same quarter, eleven years ago, the chambers of the capitol rang with arguments in favor of an appeal to arms for taking Louisiana; which, in the wisdom of our then chief magistrate was, to much greater advantage, honorably purchased; and that the same men who accuse the present administration of *madness*, for going to war, when, in fact, there was no other resort, no less accused the former administration of *pusillanimity*, for pursuing milder measures, notwithstanding there certainly did then remain grounds of hope that a reconciliation might

be effected ;—when, I say, these things are considered, we are tempted, strongly tempted, to doubt, in this particular, their sincerity, and to conclude that all the outcry is intended only to answer electioneering purposes, and to put the administration into other hands.

It is urged that, had it been proper for our government to declare *war*, it should have been declared against France, as well as England. That the conduct of France, toward this country, has been very unwarrantable, is not denied ; nor yet that a national adjustment with her may hereafter be necessary. It must be obvious, however, that the principal provocations to war have been only on the part of England : France has indeed robbed us on the highway of nations, and even burnt our vessels ; nevertheless she has not, like England, impressed our citizens, blockaded our harbors, and crimsoned our waters with American blood.

It is contended that the declaration of war at all was impolitic. I cannot think so ; but believe that this declaration and correspondent arrangements, were, of all means, the most likely to procure peace—lasting and honorable peace.

The present, however, is not the time to contest that point. When the flames are raging, it is too late for firemen to stand disputing whether, by certain means, they might not have been prevented from kindling ; their duty then is to unite in quenching

them. The flames of war are already kindled—they are gathering along our coast and threatening upon our frontiers; the duty—the common duty, therefore, of American citizens is, to use all means in their power, to bring the contest to the most speedy and most favorable issue.

Yes, my friends, the time for idle and speculative debate is, with us, at an end. We, in holy providence, are placed in a situation which demands the greatest national unity and exertion; and which, in its result, must necessarily furnish occasion for the greatest national triumph or lamentation. From the latter may we be mercifully preserved! In the former may we soon participate! And all the glory shall redound to God. AMEN.

H Y M N ,

*Sung at the close of Public Worship, when the preceding
Sermon was delivered.*

- 1 Great God of all ! thy matchless power
Should every nation still adore ;
Thee, our sovereign, we would own,
And bow before thy gracious throne.
- 2 May peace her balmy wing extend,
From age to age upon this land !
Grant FREEDOM and the GOSPEL's sound !
Make every blessing here abound !
- 3 Our *President* with wisdom crown,
His soul with thy rich grace adorn ;
Resolve his heart, 'midst all his foes,
"To launch the stream which duty shows."
- 4 Over our *Capitol* diffuse,
From hills divine, thy welcome dews ;
While *Congress*, in one patriot band,
Prove the firm fortress of our land.
- 5 Our *Magistrates*, O Lord, sustain,
Nor let them bear the sword in vain ;
Long as they fill their awful seat,
Be *Vice* seen dying at their feet.
- 6 For ever from the western sky,
Bid the destroying angel fly ;
With grateful songs our hearts inspire,
And round us blaze "*a wall of fire.*"

PARKINSON'S SELECT. H. 402.

NOTE.

The foregoing sermons have been long out of print, and are republished by the desire of many of the personal friends of the Rev. William Parkinson. Any imperfection that may be discovered in the reprint, will not, it is hoped, be laid to his charge, as bodily illness has, for a long time, kept him from active labor, and has prevented his usual accurate revision. It is now, (in the year 1846,) just half a century since he arrived at manhood, was baptized, and immediately afterward entered upon the duties of a minister of the gospel; and while some of his maturer labors are here again laid before the public, it may be profitable to look back to those of his early years, to see how his time was employed, and what example he set before the world. A letter to his venerated parents, written forty-eight years ago, and subsequently found among their papers, is therefore appended. Its publication at this time, has also been requested by some of his friends. It is apparent, from the tenor of this letter, that to the most devoted filial regard and respect to his beloved parents, he united ardent zeal in the sacred work he had undertaken, and his early, pious example, will not be without a salutary influence upon his youthful readers, while the more aged portion, especially those who sat under his long and faithful ministry, will be equally gratified with its perusal.

Carrol's Manor, Md., Sept. 17, 1798.

DEARLY BELOVED PARENTS :

When I review the length of time which has past since I left you, sorrow fills my heart, and shame covers my face, to think I have never since written unto you—to you, who, under God, have guarded my infant state, and provided for my rising years. But when I recollect the *cause* of my not writing, I am less concerned for the omission. I am sure it has not been because I have forgotten you, nor yet for want of a sufficient regard for you. You are seldom, for any considerable length of time together, out of my mind, and daily does your present and eternal happiness make a part of my addresses at the Divine Throne.

I doubt not that you wish to hear of my return home ; this, through Sovereign mercy, was with safety, health and happiness. I was permitted to fulfil all my appointments on my return, and, to the praise of the Glory of Grace, enjoyed much of the Divine presence and assistance in preaching. The extreme heat of the weather the first two days after I left you, much exhausted my feeble body, but Jesus greatly comforted my poor soul. I arrived at Trabelsburg on the Saturday evening after I left you, about half an hour before sunset. That is within six miles of Carrol's Manor. I preached there on Lord's day, to a pretty large and attentive congregation, and after

preaching, came on home. The week after I returned home, I enjoyed an uncommon degree of health, and an equal degree of consolation,—every member of my body was strung with vigor, and every power of my soul rejoiced in Jesus. The next week, however, both the health of my body and the happiness of my mind were greatly depreciated. I was taken first with a pain in my head and breast, which was succeeded by a severe bilious attack, and which, for one night especially, seemed likely to open my way to eternity. The counsels of Heaven, however, were otherwise planned ; I was again restored. I lost but two days from school, and, though in much weakness of body, I was privileged to fulfil all my appointments to preach. Since my recovery from the illness now mentioned, which lasted but about a week, I have been very healthy till to-day. This day I am much afflicted with a pain in my head, and a general debility of body. Where it will end God only knows. It reminds me, however, of the ancient declaration, “Dust thou art, and unto dust must thou return.” But, thanks be to God, “None of these things trouble me, for though my outward man perish, yet my inward man is renewed day by day,” and although my “earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved,” I humbly trust “I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” 2 Cor. 5 : 1.

Agreeably to expectation when I left you, I was

permitted to attend an Association at Tuscarora Valley. On my journey out I had the company of my beloved brother, Jeremiah Moore, and three others of the friends of Jesus. At our Association there were eight ministers, and a considerable concourse of people. There was great attention given, while nine sermons were delivered, and we were blest with peace and unanimity in the execution of our business. On my return home I had the good company of the brethren who went out with me, with the addition of my precious brother and father in the gospel, Lewis Richards. Since my return from the Association, I have received two letters from brother Richards, and have written two to him. He is to be up to preach at Carrol's Manor the last Lord's day in this month ; but, greatly to my regret, by reason of appointments which I sent out before I received his letters, I shall on that day be about sixty miles from home.

I often, yea, daily think on the situation of the people in George's Hills, and long to preach the gospel to them, but alas ! I think and wish in vain. My confinement to my school, together with the demand for my preaching here, forbids even the most distant probability of seeing you before some time next summer. The thought to me is painful, but the words occur, " Peace, be still, and know that I am God." Has Divine Providence thus separated us from each other ?—let us learn in reverence to say, " It is the

Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." One privilege we have got, and O ! may we use it. While absent in body, it is our privilege to be present with the Lord—to address the Divine Throne for the happiness of each other.

I would fondly have written letters to several of the different members of your Church ; especially to those whom I had the happiness to baptize. But as the multitude of my concerns do not afford me time, I beg you will kindly remember me to all, while I remain,

Your unworthy, but

very affectionate son,

WM. PARKINSON.

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